

MODERN POET PROPHETS

ESSAYS

CRITICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE

BY

WM. NORMAN GUTHRIE.



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TO

ANNA NORTON GUTHRIE.

THE FIRST FRUITS OF OUR LONG-SHARED STUDIES AND
ENTHUSIASMS BELONG, NOT IN VIRTUE OF THE ALL
BUT OBSOLETE COURTESY OF A SENTIMENTAL
DEDICATION, BUT BY OLD PROPRIETARY
RIGHTS IN WHATEVER GOOD THEY
MAY CONTAIN.

Through the purple portal of that heart of thine
Where sets the sun of self in sumptuous state,
Pass on, with earth's full beauty insatiate,
To where no range of mountainous hopes confine
Thy vision clear; THOU, who dost life resign,
Its whole cloud-sky of follies dissipate,
Pierce on—the inmost Splendor contemplate,
Float rapturously on fluctuant deeps divine!

But O, return not thence, thou MAN OF GOD,
Leave not thy bliss to teach us; nought avails.
We yet will tread the ways our fathers trod.
Above earth's dusk-veiled peaks of purity, dumb,
Stand beckoning! If thy starry summons fails,
Will cries and tears and pleadings make us come?

A WORD TO THE READER.

For a number of years I had planned a volume of essays that should attempt to set forth a view of the poets not usually taken by modern readers. It seemed to me, and still seems, that while the poets are not exactly "God's only truth-tellers," yet they do bring the scientific truths and speculations, the moral and social ideals of their period, to the test of beauty; they serve to make us feel the difference between the respectable and the heroic; the half-truth, brilliant but death-dealing, and the vital and quickening whole-truth; the pleasurable is found to be quite distinct from the beautiful, and the ordinary aims of life shabby, mean, or base; success is shown to be not half so desirable as merit; the hypocrisies of life are made to seem hypocrisies.

The poets are the most effective preachers because they do not preach. Their failures are as instructive as their successes. We learn from the former often that no amount of art can make what is unbeautiful permanently pleasing. While their successes, as "joys forever," or rather well-springs of joy, do more than teach. What we need is not so much to know, as to love the truth. We usually fail rather in will than in discrimination. The true and great poets make us love the truth, and loving it, em-

body it. They show us that the truth is large. Leopardi makes us feel that Pessimism is true. Shelley makes us surer still of Optimism. A Browning will make us see the relation between both moods, as parts of a larger, more human view of life.

In the original circulars, other essays were included which the exigencies of bookmaking have forced me to omit. It had been my intention to end with Tennyson and Robert Browning, and to make an essay on Blake, the poet and seer, accompany that on Shelley's Prometheus. If the present volume does not complete my design, I shall be at all events comforted by the thought that I shall have more time and space to treat of these and others more nearly as they deserve in some future volume.

The first essay in the book is not, strictly speaking, an essay at all, being merely a lecture, with such faults as a hastily prepared lecture is likely to suffer from. It appears where it does out of consideration for a number who heard it and were desirous of seeing it in print. I should also add that four of the seven essays that constitute the matter of this book have appeared previously in the *Sewanee Review*, a quarterly periodical of criticism, Political, Religious and Literary, to whose genial and able editor I am indebted for many little suggestions in those four, and in fact also for the existence of one of them, written, as it was, at his suggestion.

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MODERN POET PROPHETS.

ESSAYS CRITICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE.

IDEAL WOMANHOOD IN DANTE, GOETHE AND BROWNING.

The days for male egotism, blatant and bellowing, are fast drawing to a painful close. The signs of the times are not hard to discern. Dire and portentous, with snaky locks, they glare *us*, proud and hitherto undoubted sovereigns of nature, savagely in the face. We have harnessed steam, yoked the lightning, scaled Olympus and feasted in the golden houses of the gods. But it were futile to contend against Fate. And why is our doom sealed? The foe is within, holding the keys of our heart, wearing the crown of our glory!

Though the Germans and Celts may dispute with one another the honor of having first affirmed the equality of man and woman, was it not in any case in its completeness a doctrine of the Christ? If St. Paul be understood to have apprehended it imperfectly, does it alter the fact that it is Christ's? Is not the glorification of humility, gentleness, tenderness, patience, fortitude and faithfulness the glorification in

very deed of mother, wife, sister and daughter? The Dark Ages, so called, the ages of much faith in Christ, but more sensual violence, greed, cruelty, craft and fatuous bigotry (always reducible to faith in self), what were they if not the period of gestation for the Christian ideal of womanhood, which has found its adequate expression (perverse enough, some will think) in the modern doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin, Queen of Heaven, daughter, bride and Mother of God? Few can be trusted to tell fitly the many myths of immaculate Mary—lovely flowers that sprang from holy soil—quivering rays of a miraculous Aurora—snatches of celestial song caught as the doors of Paradise opened and closed admitting earth's godly women. Of those myths it is not my purpose to speak. My object is more modest, to trace through Dante, Goethe and Browning the growth in definiteness of this ideal and its increasing ability to make for itself a home by the hearthstone of ordinary men, as expressed in its more and more substantial life-likeness of poetic incarnation.

I. BEATRICE AND MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

What a wonderful artistic intimation of that which it is not lawful for man to utter have we not in Dante's Rose of the blessed! A cup of lunar crystal brimful of a sunny supernatural wine; a vast sea lying breathless in contemplative ecstasy beneath the hovering heaven, interrogating reverently its height, and flashing back the vouchsafed answer in a trance of mirrored glory—the grateful worship of its quickened deep; and after every figure has been exhausted do we not return to Dante's Rose? Tiers

of holy souls—the petals; the angels, like sunbeams—busy bees of God—ascending, descending, translucent to those below, of visible beauty to those above, bringing down pearly dew-drops of divine grace and love, carrying up the perfume of devout wishes and the honey of saintly praise! Is not this wonderful Rose a thing for silent wonder, to brood over until the rapture of adoration closes the sense, and thought is transfigured, etherealized, to that hushed feeling we dare not seem to note lest it forsake us, which is wont to betoken the spiritual nearness of some one dearly loved, and long, long missed?

But it is not in search of mystic lore and transport we shall now cast a glance athwart the holy Rose, but to ascertain the nature of Ideal Womanhood, and to analyze it if we may into irreducible constituents. Indeed, as it passed through the quivering atmosphere of Dante's vision the integral iridescent ray divides into its seven distinct hues of virtue, a society of symbolic women that enflesh them, arranged in a Godward scale. Let us hope we shall not be too fanciful in the interpretation of each particular hieroglyph; but, at all events, we are sure that the purport of the inscription as a whole is too clear for any reasonable doubt or misconstruction.

We begin with the lowest round of this strange Jacob's ladder, in which the rounds are the very angels themselves, immovable forever, on which not they, but Dante, you and I, can ascend at will in the spirit to heaven.

First and simplest element of ideal womanhood is the courage of love to forsake the surroundings of childhood, to snap individual ties, to follow the fate

and share the chance of those whom in the guise of dependence she upholds, strengthens, comforts:—*Ruth*.

As second element, we have the courage of love to defend her home and neighboring homes by the heroic performance of deeds such as their safety seems to require, but which are in themselves otherwise repugnant to her, and fraught with danger to what she knows to be the most precious of herself in the sight of men:—*Judith*.

As third element, we have the courage to forsake the loves and duties of girlhood, father and mother, brothers and sisters, for a husband far away; the known and tried and loved for the unknown, untried, yet not unloved; the trust that what she loves before she knows is altogether worthy of her devotion, or will become so:—*Rebecca*.

As fourth element, we have the courage to hold and impart her faith in Love. She has learned from Abraham, the Friend of God! and she teaches Isaac, "the child of promise:"—*Sarah*.

In her we have the crown of natural womanhood. The usual idealizing power of men mounts no higher. More than wife to the friend of God, and mother of the faithful, woman surely can not be expected to become! But such is not the view of Dante. Sarah, the crown of natural womanhood, is in turn the footstool only of a higher womanhood still—the spiritual. Not wife to "the friend of God," but "bride of God" himself; not "mother of the faithful" "servant of God," but Mother of the Faithful Son of God himself! Such is the burst of glory that man has beheld, and less than its luster and loveliness he dare not now on his soul's peril require.

Let us begin our ascent once more with Sarah (courage to defend and transmit a traditional faith), and arrive at the fifth element (the second of the higher quaternary), the courage to forsake a traditional faith and its ease, in order to seek, and seeking to find, a personal revelation of the Divine, an assurance incommunicable directly, but which so celestializes its receiver as to compel and captivate others till they too seek and find; inner contemplation, oblivious, though nowise scornful, of religious externals:—*Rachel*; whence is derived an ever-increasing, immediate knowledge of that which gives all those externals what value they have, not merely blissful but bliss-giving:—*Beatrice*.

As sixth element (third of the higher quaternary), we have the courage of her who has seen Paradise to bring forth such as may not ever see it, for aught she knows; to suffer for, and lovingly to foster offspring that will rise and curse her when they sin, with coward soul attributing their own falls and foulness to her who gave them life, at cost not merely of her bodily substance, but also of that most precious leisure which would let her continue, in studious trance of faith, to realize with secret joy the Paradise of God within:—*Eve*, the mother of all *living*! of all who truly live; children of a self-oblation to the cause of humanity; children that need saving to be sure, but are called to that salvation in the everlasting purpose of the Holy One.

Again we have reached the crown,—the greater Sarah. And who is she?

White bride of God, sweet Mary maid,
At Gabriel's greeting sore afraid

Did under thee thy white knees sink ?
 Did thy free hair fall down, a veil,
 Betwixt his glory and thine so pale ?
 Thine hands clasped tight,
 Thine eyes tear-bright,—
 What thought of wonder didst thou think ?

“ Fear not ” there swelled a musical tone
 That wrought a mystic peace unknown ;
 Tingled the air, and thy gasped breath
 Drew in a fragrant cool delight,
 Lifting the soul with holy might
 Till thou didst rise
 With shamefast eyes :
 “ Speak, the Lord’s handmaid harkeneth.”

What gracious greeting, Gabriel,
 As thine so sweetly terrible ?
 Yea,—like a lily dew-beladen
 Whom thrills and shakes the morning air
 To warble of birds,—on thy feet bare
 Fall happy showers—
 Thy tears and ours—
 White bride of God, sweet Mary maiden !

The angel gone, she mused and prayed,
 On bended knees, pure Mary maid :
 Nor feared what hearts incredulous
 Would dare devise, for only she
 Disposed herself God’s bride to be ;
 In meekest mind
 To all else blind
 But God’s sweet grace all glorious.

Tell, tell us, sacred Lily of God,
 In what weird dream thy white feet trod,
 For days and nights with joy amazed ?
 As rests the smooth sea hyaline
 Whereon the vast blue heaven doth shine,
 O’ershadowed thee
 God’s Mystery
 As on thine open heart he gazed ?

Blessèd, O blessèd blessèd Rose,—
Whom Love, of all earth's purest, chose,—
Thy dreams be thine alone, lest we
Should taint, for love of thee too great,
Their tender beauty immaculate !
Simple girl bride,
God magnified
For thy very girl's simplicity !

Well, and what does all this signify ? As highest element, inclusive of all inferior elements if superseding them (so to speak, their supernatural consummation), we have the power of love to forsake humanity (its demands, its rewards) for the Divine, and become only and altogether receptive to It: no mere contemplation (Rachel) and knowledge of It (Beatrice); not the mere bringing into being of the adorers of It, that will, maybe, scorn her (Eve), but the power of love to be impregnated by the Divine itself, and bear fruit to It; to help its spiritual fullness to a bodily reality; to make effectual its sublime condescension of will to the carnal needs of men, who would not believe the manifestations of the Word *within* (their spiritual eyes fast glued) until they touched with the coarse animal sense for external fact, a shadow or image of It *without*; and such essentially and symbolically is the blessed Virgin Queen of Heaven:—*St. Mary*.*

Let us observe that these seven colors of virtue bear each to each in turn an indissoluble connection. There is a rhythm running through them of negative and positive, denial and assertion, forsaking and taking, progress and rest. The first and last are denials of self, forsakings of lower for higher love, progress at the cost

* For the convenience of the reader a diagram section of the Rose of the Blessed will be found in the Appendix.

of a sword-pierced heart. So we come to God by alternate failure and success, destruction and construction, and with St. Mary, we find "peace at the last," in letting God have and do and be our—nay—His all in all. It is also worth noting how she is protected—rather escorted for mere honor's sake—into the presence of her Sufficiency. At her left is Adam, the father of the natural savable race, assisted to higher things by Moses, the apostle of the Law. At her right is St. Peter, the father (by courtesy) of the race supernatural and saved, in his own words "partakers of the Divine nature,"* seconded by St. John, the apostle of Charity, who speaks of the "unction" or Christhood, which we "*have* from the Holy One" Himself,† love of "Love," and therefore "very god of very God."‡

* 2 Pet. i., 4.

† 1 Jno. ii., 20, and 1 Jno. iv., 7, 8.

‡ One can not help in passing the observation that by a quite heretical removal of Jesus from the Rose of redeemed humanity, and his transfer into the sheer Deity as a sort of floating platonic idea of Man, the ladder of manhood opposite that of womanhood is sadly imperfect, not to say unorthodox, if in these days the latter word can be considered a reproach! John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said that he that was "little in the kingdom of God" is "greater than he" (Luke vii., 28), is made the highest crown of sainthood. "Repentance from dead works" has to do duty with men for the "blissful self-oblation" of St. Mary, "blessed among women!" *Beneath* him (a strange reflection, one would think, on their being even "little" in the kingdom of Heaven) sit St. Francis for Mysticism, St. Benedict for Asceticism, and St. Augustine for Theology. Below St. Augustine no one is worthy to be particularly mentioned as seated in his place. To the left of the Baptist is Lucia, presumably Greek philosophy and latter-day science, to his right is St. Anne, holy expectancy—the mother of the Virgin. No wonder, then, with such a conception of the Christ, mariolatry flourished and flourishes!

II. GRETCHEN OF FAUST.

It is not easy to tear oneself away from the high imaginations of Dante. One may or may not regard his symbolic system as cumbersome and obsolete; one may repudiate his theology with more of horror than can be accounted for merely by our transition from the idea of "justice" to that of "love" in eschatology, and our determination to be more reserved in definitions of life after death; but nevertheless, the spell of that wonderful creation of Mediæval thought is so compulsive! In passing to Goethe's Faust from the *Divina Commedia* we have left a world of solutions to enter one of as yet insoluble riddles; a world where one's place is already determined for better, for worse, or where one has at least the assurance of some day finding it, to enter a world where one is tortured in Hell by the hope of its temporariness, and in Heaven by the doubt of its eternity.

The purpose of Goethe was the same as that of Dante; to give a map of the river of human destiny—to explore if possible its source and tell us something of the "engulfing sea!" But Dante accepted for every problem substantially the answer of his civilization verified by his own intense, if limited experience. His bold apriorism could content itself with scholastic theology and philosophy slightly modified, or with Greek ethics, and Roman notions of law and government adapted to them. The tradition was so rich, he never had the time to count it out coin by coin and discover its insufficiency to cancel the human mind's irrepudiable debt to Mystery; it

never occurred to him that the coin might not pass current. If Goethe did not count out the pieces, with which he hoped to bribe away the hordes of devastating doubts from the happy plains of human heart-life, at all events he tested each coin ere he paid it into their hands. Goethe found no answer upon which his intelligent contemporaries were unanimously agreed; he did not even discover the various suggestions that found favor, to be harmonizable. His wary aposteriorism compelled him to procure a theory of life at the end of a personal experiment conducted with as little prejudice as possible, and therefore at great risk. Consequently Dante's work is dramatically solid throughout; the outline is decided, often harsh, for he is able to use history (since expressive of the answer of his civilization), while Goethe's work, whenever it is of general import, becomes vapory, its outline wavering, history yielding only inadequate materials (as his theory was one that had not yet been consciously tested by mankind); even myths requiring so much reconstruction as to deprive them almost of the power of illusion and appeal to faith, except where they become autobiographic—his life enlarged to the eye by mountain mists. Yet with all deductions duly made (faults inherent in the very prophetic character of the work), how marvelous and magical a poem! How its audacious anticipations are coming one by one, into the field of vision—not all stars of the first magnitude—but such stars that one wonders they were not discerned before, so sharp and obstinate are their scintillations as they hang now in ascended Heaven.

And Gretchen is surely more near to us than Dante's Queen of Heaven. Gretchen (as one would

expect of the Father of evolutionary theory) exhibits the power of womanhood, while its character is yet incomplete. In the Paradiso we have a finished symphony where in Faust we have a wonderful improvisation feeling its way to glory. Gretchen is becoming Mary—she will not surely be content to sit on any round below, and treat the gap between as not to be crossed without sacrilege; but though as yet so many, many rounds below, she has done the work of Beatrice, she has called her lover from out the “*selva oscura*” and brought him to the Blessed Company.

In the glass (loathing the antics of the witch’s apes) Faust catches a first rapturous glimpse of what can draw him—of what is worth pursuit. “In a glass” because our ideals are ghostly doubles, so to say, of our possible selves, phantasmal projections of what we fain would be, which (their origin in us, overlooked or forgotten) take seeming possession of some external thing or person, to saturate it for us with a weird alien beauty; and thus embodied, to all appearances, in their own right, they arrogantly demand of us (the future substance of which they are mere shadows) not devout reverence only, but for their sakes, if need be, an absolute self-sacrifice. What a blessed illusion is not this! How good that we separate our ideals from ourselves, to give ourselves to them and so to other selves! How else could the chasm be bridged that islands us—and the old continental unity of which Arnold sings reassert itself in fact?

Was it Helena or Gretchen that Faust saw? Enough if we know that it was “*das Ewig-weibliche*,” in one of its incarnations, provided we remember that

none persists in the world beyond, to meet and comfort him, but that concrete, frail, fallen, and risen creature of flesh and blood, whose angelic name is not revealed.

We all know the terrible story. Lust mingles with love, adoration becomes sacrilege—the sun is eclipsed; then it sets in blood and gloom. And what was her fault, poor, foolish girl? Simply that her love was too confiding; that she mistook the idol for the God, and directed not *through* it, her worship, but *to* it! That she could not do enough for him, who, (wrapt solely in self) would do nothing for her! That her childish trust reinforced (not by vanity let us say, but) by the intense wish which transmutes for us the flimsiest improbabilities into a solid world of facts, leads her to suppose that the worship, she ought to know goes *through* her, is *to* her! That no warning intuitions can be heeded because they wear the guise of doubt in *his* worth whom to doubt were sin, though they are in fact only a doubt of his self-comprehension, of his practical attainment of the *self* he shall become, and she prophetically endows him with already.

But it is now all over. She will not again anticipate his perfection; assume in conduct as complete what is no more than rudimentary. She will not be saved *from* suffering, but *through* suffering. She has given herself now with the same utter abandonment to man's terrible caricature of God's justice with which she gave herself before to her lover. She has not ceased to love him, only she loves him for God's sake, not God for his. "She is judged," says the sneering double of Faust; "she is saved," is the word from Heaven.

But Faust is a new man. He will not expiate his crime in the old craven fashion. He will atone for it by life, not death. Born of love, remorse and pity, a new idealizing energy seizes upon Faust. He must "strive on and upward to the highest pitch of existence" even if "the sun have set forever in his rear." Scope for his pent energies he must have; and, the opportunity presenting itself, power first tempts him. Power and wealth attained are discovered to be mere means. Their end is enjoyment; the object of enjoyment, Beauty. Art without living beauty is mere mimicry and mechanical tradition. Down to the world of mysteries, the unsunned depths of the soul of man! Get Helena, for the Greeks knew beauty, and in Helena they found a form fit to embody their ideal. But to see Helena is not merely to enjoy unmoved, altruistically. No sooner has one seen than a mad passion to possess is begotten. Only after painful journeys through the ideal world of dead men recreated in the modern mind (its form—the old, its substance—new—mere fancy)—the presence of each ghostly inhabitant conclusive proof of the potency of studious spells—only in such wise can Helena be possessed. But at the touch of sorrow all is gone, save the memory of a weird passion—a veil, a mantle—things that hid and protected her, now flowers whence the perfume soul has flitted, or fossil forests that shaded once luxuriantly a world of extinct life. And yet this mantle, this veil lifts one above all things mean and low.

Faust has learned in this long search the paradox that pleasure must not be pursued, that perhaps it is therefore reasonable to suppose life is for mere life's

sake, and pleasure not its end, being only the reward of them who seek it, by leaving it out of their reckonings. The spirit of beauty was not to be possessed by any galvanization of old art to apparent vitality. The ideal is a living power; it is felt if not seen. The greatest study for man is man. Surely Jules is right—

“ Shall to produce from out of unshaped stuff
Be Art—and further to evoke a soul
From form be nothing ”? —(Pippa Passes.)

The greatest opportunity to-day for the idealizing faculty is the world of men. Therefore, he first saves social order in propping up the tottering throne, and then attempts to create social felicity—to free the individual from hampering circumstances, to obtain a seasonable springtime for the bursting of the blossom of humanity. In this his effort, he sins his last great sin: sheer reckless impatience in establishing an ideal, destroying what should be allowed (since in itself harmless) to die a natural death. He felt sorrow, not remorse, for this act which he disowns; his fault being not the deed, but the impatient wish that wrought it. In this effort he overcomes all selfish considerations and has that sudden sense at length of what supreme bliss is.

We know how true is the paradox that rest is rust, and yet that work is for repose. Content with self is the death of the soul. Oblivion of self (which resembles content), in sympathetic consciousness of others and their joys, is the soul's most complete life. So Mephistopheles thinks he has won his nefarious bet. He has not. Angelic roses are sulphurous flames to the devils. “ Saved is he who never ceases to strive,

by unseen powers that wait to help ; and if some loving soul in the world beyond has felt with him and prayed for him, the whole host of the blessed meet him with a fervent welcome."

Then once more is it that we encounter Gretchen, but now as the purified soul that caused his welcome. Three Mariés are close to the Holy Mary, not "five sweet symphonies" as in Rosetti's exquisite poem, virgins of mere untempted chastity, but penitent public sinners. They intercede for Gretchen. The Queen is to forgive and receive as maid of honor the loving, "the gentle soul that forgot her duty only once, nor ever dreamed that she was erring then." No sooner is Gretchen in favor than she sees the lover of her girlhood, and the prayer of her whole being is "grant me that I may instruct him, for he is yet blinded, unused to Heaven's new day." She asks to be allowed to "go" and "condescend." The answer, as firm as it is unexpected: "come" and "ascend!" Follow me "to higher spheres!" Inquire not whether he is nearing. Make the distance between him and thee still greater, and when he grows aware of thy presence, like far-off strains of music barely heard, then he will reach out after thee and follow!* We feel that, so admonished she mounts up—holy incense from the censer in which all memories of her bruised and broken life are fast consuming. And Faust admitted to the society of angels is quickened to new energetic effort by the dawning recognition:—after all the power that drew him and still draws him—known as

*Substantially Christ's answer to Peter's inquiry about John. Jno. xxi., 21.

passion, ambition, beauty, patriotism, philanthropy—was always one, same spirit affecting him in divers ways; it was the love of Gretchen pleading with his spirit and changing mask so often to avoid a premature discovery, lest he be tempted to worship and adore as God, his fellow-servant, his soul's own equal love, and fall thus into her sin.

Ah! Gretchen has her lesson. The lily is the flower of purity, not merely for its almost unbearably radiant whiteness, for its penetrating perfume that floats upon the air and draws one panting, breathless to it; but because it stands always erect, each cup opening heavenward first, then drooping for the entranced earth to behold its holy secrets, but its stalk never bending with the superincumbent load of glory except to snap in the violent wind, and fling it in the dust. Ah! there was her mistake on earth. And was she not asking saintly Mary to permit her to sin the same unconscious sin afresh in heaven? No, rise! and *he* will rise. Stoop and he will be content to stay below—nay, intoxicated with thy condescending sweetness he will lose reason and self-mastery, and drag thee down to death!

Our ideal must be above us, not in station but in grace. Should it turn about inquiring if we follow? Are we to be stirred out of our apparent lethargy, our ecstasy of æsthetic adoration and achieve some living likeness to what we love? Let it rise then out of sight, and we will surely soar after, borne upward by the quick wingbeats of desire. "All things perishable are but a parable; here the impossible occurs and the unspeakable is done," for the ideal, ever living (to man in woman's guise) rises persistently, and rising "raises us up and on forever."

III. BROWNING'S PIPPA.

In Goethe's *Faust* we have the evolution of this ideal indicated from without, but only a fragment of its transcendental history suggested. We study it rather in its various disguises and their particular effects, than in its inherent self-accelerative cause-power. We do not see in Goethe's *Faust* how the ideal itself is benefited in its inner life, and fulfills its own individual purpose (without regard to what it elevates and develops), unless by the acquisition of a new motive for self-elevation and self-development, which, were such conceptions admissible, might just as well be applied directly to any *Faust*, as to any *Margaret*. It is in Browning that we find, first, the unconscious, necessary, God-caused unfolding of the Ideal itself, set forth in four stages, pictured as four independent, successive incarnations of the same divine womanhood:—*Pippa*, the unconsciously ministering angel, like flowers in a sick room, lovely and sweet, and therefore potent to save; *Pompilia*, suffering, she knows not why, and saving, she knows not how; *James Lee's Wife*, known only by her torturer's name, suffering and aware of the injustice, rebellious first and then submissive, being perfected by such suffering, and willing to be God's instrument, even if he use her not for tasks of conscious mercy; and finally, the "*Lyric Love*," dweller in "realms of help," inspirer and blesser of the man she loves, willing to do her deeds thro' him now, which all men call *his* save he, and doubtless disclaiming them, to ascribe all the glory to Love, the one God, great and good, in both.

What a foolish work or supererogation to describe

at length inimitable descriptions! Let every one go and find for himself. Only a few suggestions will be offered, hoping the reader will excuse them. The writer makes them only lest his own soul misunderstand or fail to appreciate as it ought what Browning gives us all to see.

There are nowadays some who can not believe—so much pain and struggle do they see—that God every now and then brings souls into the world that have no duty but to be like the wayside spring which wells up, makes the sunbeams merry in dancing on it, ever edged with azure forget-me-nots that speak of the unfathomable blue; and the hopeless passer-by who meditated crime has his soul filled with “inextinguishable laughter,” drinking at this spring oblivion of hate, that wonderous intoxicating draught Shelley describes as the “bliss” merely “to move, to breathe, to be.” Little Pippa in her holiday despair of serving, forced to be merely selfish (so she thinks), goes forth and sings her faith, “Even I already seem to share in God’s love.” So she does, and infinitely more than she knows. Disappointed, of course she is, because God will not show her how not simply *useful*, but indispensable, she has been; in fact His very five-fold interposition has she been, and once, too, in her own behalf, though wholly unaware of danger (the granting she will never know of a prayer she never knew she made); but this *Desire to be useful* has been enough to make her holiday happy. She meditates: “Ah me! and my important part with *them*—This morning’s hymn half promised when I rose,” but with a joyous, instinctive faith in God she comments: “True in some sense or other I suppose:”—*faith that she is useful* has made her happy

day holy. Do you suppose that she will pour forth a litany at her bedside? "God bless me, I can pray no more to-night:"—*desire*, simple, direct, disinterested *to be blessed in a usefulness* which God only understands, and she is willing to accept on trust. And, last of all, "No doubt some way or other hymns say right—All service ranks the same with God:"—*faith*, utter, child-like, barely conscious *that she is* actually *blessed*, though poor, sweet, silly girl she can not know how blessed she is!

Oh! the delicious self-importance of the child! So sure it is welcome, so unaware of rival charms! But here we have what is still lovelier. Instinctive self-assertion replaced by modest faith that God will speak for her. Is she not in Paradise, the bitter fruit untasted? Does one wonder such a bird escaped the fowler's snare from sheer ignorance? Never caught sight of the snake's beady eyes, never feared, but sat safe all the while on her twig, singing of God's beautiful world, spreading her little wings—no, not to fly (why should she? is not Heaven where she is?), but to quiver for quick joy? Others, charmed by evil, heard, looked up, the spell was snapped, and they flew away, nor in their happiness at liberation questioned who she was that piped deliverance to their souls!

POMPILIA.

Pompilia! Who shall tell her tale? One line of Guido Franceschini, her devilish husband, who having outraged, robbed, tortured, slandered, butchered, defamed her in death, to his uttermost, as Jupiter appeals from the Judgment of embodied Eternity, to his enemies:

“ Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus!”

—(Pro. Unb., A. iii., Sc. ii.)

so he too cries in his first sincerity, elicited by his last despair:

“ Abate! Cardinal! Christ! Maria! God!

Pompilia, will you let them murder me?”

—(Rg. and Bk. xi., p. 457.)*

To kindle faith in devils by one's meek sufferings borne as a testimony not *against* them, but *to* them, of the infinite goodness of God! †

The foul misconstruction of his efforts to save and shield her, the Mephistophelian sneers of a secretly vicious, semi-ecclesiastical court, can not suppress in Giuseppe Caponsacchi his generous enthusiasm for her beauty, goodness, meekness, martyrdom. Yes, he acknowledges that he might have sought her acquaintance from most unpriestly passion, for aught that his rearing and previous habits could attest, but that the authoritative Word that came to him in her presence “was God's.” “I had been lifted to the level of her.” (Rg. & Bk. vi., p. 211). “The glory of life, the beauty of the world, the splendor of heaven” (p. 191). “The perfect soul, *Pompilia*” (p. 215). He will not allow any to think he was “infatuated” (p. 233). Judged by strict artistic ideals her features might not be perfect; but “the white he saw shine through her was her soul's” (p. 214); the feeling she inspired has

* References by page are to the Riverside edition (vol. iii).

† For our slowness to grasp such a doctrine of suffering, compare Authorized version with Revised version of the New Testament in Matt. x., 18; Mk. xiii., 9; Mk. vi., 11; Lk. ix., 5; Lk. xxi., 13.

made "duty to God" be "duty to her" (p. 212); "it is not love," "it is *faith*,"

"The feeling that there's God, he reigns and rules
Out of this low world." (p. 216.)

He who was thus "blessed by the revelation of Pompilia (p. 230), can not concede that he alone is to be thus 'lifted to the level of her;'" he bids his judges "be advised," and in her honor "Build churches—go pray!" and they may be sure they "will find" *him* "there" (p. 231). That she is dying—dead—he at first can not, will not believe. It is a mystery that such should agonize, and leave the earth so beyond all reckoning poor, to enrich a heaven that needs them not. But,

"Saints to do *us* good
Must be in heaven (I seem to understand),
We never find them *saints* before, at least." (p. 193.)

And, when one thinks of it, she was not in need of such discipline (as we are) for her own perfection's sake. Why was she ever sent to earth, a lily of heaven cast in a hell of mire and fire—if not that:

"Through such souls alone,
God stooping, shows sufficient of his light
For us in the dark to rise by?" (p. 278.)

"And I rise!" he adds. Pompilia is none other, poor girl-wife, girl-mother, that endures torments for which she can assign no reason in personal wickedness deserving punishment, and which she is too unconscious of her worth to construe as a precious witness borne to truth and purity—she is none other, indeed, than that meekness which is strength; that womanly endurance which transmutes man's violent lust into courteous love, filling him with an honorable shame;

that womanly innocence which finally insinuates into the soul of the very arch-fiend himself such trust and love as a discomfited brutality can be made to feel.

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

James Lee's wife, not even a name, much less a soul of her own! The mature, conscious wife, learning by the inadequacy of her relations to the man she worships, the lesson poor dying Pompilia taught:

"Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable,
In heaven we have the real and true and sure."

—(Rg. & Bk. vii., p. 218.)

But there is an advance made in this woman. Not merely because in heaven we shall—

"Be as the angels rather, who, apart,
Know themselves into One, are found at length
Married," —(Id.)

must we "go up for gain above;" but we are now to *give* ourselves to earth unsparingly:

"If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you!
Make the low nature better by your throes!"

—(J.'s L.'s W. vii., St. 2.)

We are to—

"Rejoice that man is hurled
From change to change unceasingly,
His soul's wings never furled." —(Id. vii., St. 4.)

We are to realize how absurd is such a petulant demand:

"I love—shall *that* be life's strait dole?
I must live beloved, or die!" —(Id. viii., St. 3.)

with absolute self-denial, perceiving that we are not worthy of such a boon as a "mutual flame" until we are prepared to be burned, mere fuel in a love-fire,

whose purpose it is to warm the hands a moment of those who will then look elsewhere for light and heat, and leave us to blaze on alone. Then shall we learn as did James Lee's wife what an ecstasy there is in being loved; the ecstasy James Lee himself lacks wholly, though so rich in what might give it, because he only loves his pleasure. She has turned her back resolutely on the sun of selfish happiness, and lo! as with Faust, a more glorious orb of selfless bliss rises again in the East before her, and "the darkness is in her rear;" or more accurately speaking, she seeks for light no more, where it is not (without, for self), and finds it therefore where it is (within, as God).*

Is it not as though the soul of Pompilia (who after all did find in Caponsacchi a lover "real and true and sure,") were sent once more to earth to find, this time *none* to respond, and she were forced, thus, "to go up" "above," not for the gain of any human companionship to answer her demands, but from desperate desire solely after the living *Love* itself, which gives and only takes returns to give more plentifully still?

LYRIC LOVE.

In the dedication which closes the first book of Robert Browning's unique Epic of Monologues, we reach, if possible, a greater altitude, breathe a more rarified atmosphere, have sensations still more mystically soul-sufficient. The lover has passed through

* Compare Faust's "So bleibe denn die Sonne mir in Rücken" with the egotistic claim of Baccalaureus to Mephistopheles "Das Helle vor mir, Finsterniss im Rücken," which Faust at length realizes when blind to the world without, "Allein im Innern leuchtet helles Licht."

the ghastly wilderness of grief. He has made its solitudes populous with memories of her. He issues now for self-oblivious service to his fellow men—to share with them his revelation of her (Rg. & Bk. vi, p. 230) which he had when lifted to her level. (Id. p. 211.)

“All a wonder and a wild desire”:—She is a being compact wholly of rapture in God, and so she is to her lover a theophany—imparting her subjective rapture to him; she is a being compact wholly of desire for the God, whose vision transports her, so translating her lover’s desire for her into desire for *Him*, thrilling him with a passion for the Divine. Henceforth his song:

“My due to God who best taught song by gift of thee”
can not be without a supplication for soul-communion with her, that a double portion of her spirit should breathe into his work, and make it stand up terribly beautiful, a champion of things holy. His love to her renders him *one* with her, “despite the distance and the dark;” her love to God renders her *one* with Him, for the removal of her presence would “blanch” “the blue” of His abode; and so, the lover, through this twofold *oneness*, while yet on earth, whenever he closes his fleshly eyes to the world, anticipates, nay, presently enjoys the Beatific Vision; a vision Dante had but once, and which to enjoy anew he might have to toil up once again the “arduous ascent”; a nobler vision, too, be it observed, in that it blinds not, but sets gently aglow with quiet light, such as will irradiate from the beholder this dismal world, a light of mercy and tenderness, searching out to save the infinitesimally small and mean:

“There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
 What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
 On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.”
 —(Abt Vogler.)

A vision of omnipotent love that never despairs of victory; that is omniscient in devices to overcome in the end evil with good; that will gladly allow, nay impose, millions of ages of pain for the ultimate purification (voluntary and complete) of the gold from dross; who is a fire—ostensibly wrath—but in very truth a manifestation of love especially adapted to the wicked and depraved, whom love as love would damn, by depriving of external goad to goodness such as have not yet the invincible impulse from within.

This Lyric Love we may invoke to help us, not imploring her to stoop (as Gretchen once did, and then again asked leave to do), but to be for us a chariot of fire with horses of quick fire trampling the smoke of sorrows, striking thence sparks of faith, and whirling us into the presence of the Light Invisible—visible only when refracted by the blessed Company, of which She to us is dearest, holiest and most beautiful.

CONCLUSION.

My task is now accomplished, one imposed on myself for my own satisfaction, and executed with peculiar delight.

We hear on all hands alarming rumors of change. The long ages of successful male egotism are to be avenged. Women are every-where in council assembled. May there not some day be a new St. Bartholomew's, it is whispered? Oh! no, sounds the

answer: "We shall want them for 'hewers of wood, and drawers of water.'" For of course the new woman has it in her heart to see the Lord's will executed *verbatim literatim*: "In the *sweat* of thy brow shalt thou eat *bread*, till thou return unto the ground." As for the "butter and honey" which the prophet saw "every one eating" that was "left in the midst of the land," it shall be reserved for those only who are in the curse allowed a more liberal diet—the *ladies*, not the lords of Creation!

Nothing odder, it seems to me, could happen than this setting of sex against sex. That there is a problem none denies. But the first step toward its happy solution is the resolve to let bygones be bygones. The enmity was to be between the seed of the *serpent* and the seed of the woman! Besides the "fall," all admit, has been quite annulled by a more than compensatory "rise," and the language of that much-quoted malison reversed long since. Let us have no "female egotism," else we shall bemoan the death and burial of the "male." After all, male egotism counted itself bound to a certain "solemn" bending and "unbending of the vertebral column" (to quote Browning's clever words) before the shrine of ideal womanhood, and did not fail to impose upon itself a certain respect for those unassertive members of the "fair" sex who threw themselves upon its chivalry for protection. What would ensue were female egotism rampant, we can only surmise. We fancy that, with traditional perversity, the bold, blatant male would be allowed to fare exceeding well, provided he were bold and blatant enough, while the unfortunate who acknowl-

edged female supremacy would be tenderly assisted in perishing "from off the face of the land."

Yes, there is a problem, of course. But it will be solved only by the utter ignoring of it. Not perhaps in Tennysonian idyl-fashion, but at all events more acceptably, surely more in accord with the ways of the world will it be solved—letting sex be no distinction between soul and soul, except where it does and must count, in courtship and family life, and that larger sphere of courtship—society—and that larger family—mankind. The free competition of the sexes is impossible. The opponents of the opposite sex will be quietly weeded out by the law of matrimonial selection from the seed bed of humanity, or thoroughly converted by a wholesome bit of romance. So, there need be no vaticinal convulsions, no rueful headshakes of misgiving, no shudders due to grievous anticipation of ills that are so far as we can see unimaginable.

But is it altogether impossible to view this question judicially? Can not the evidence of sick sentiment be dispensed with once for all? Can not the judge excuse it, and peremptorily, from troubling us with its depositions, when it is in such crying need of attention at some charity hospital? Why allow the witness of any thing so habitually perjured as sentiment when sick? Why invite any testimony but that of plain, honest, healthy, robust feeling? The advocates of continued legal and social disabilities for women are already defeated. Let no one insult them in their last desperate contortions of impotent rage. Let them be allowed to vent it in sulphurous language if they deem such language medicinal, as waters charged with brimstone are believed to be! Was the

husband even by St. Paul (poor misunderstood saint!) ever declared the "savior of the body"* except *thanks* to our forefathers and a gross piece of mistranslation, such as they occasionally winked at in order to procure support for a pet heresy? And the thanks here adjudged as their due, who is so brave a spendthrift of ambiguous praise as to pay, unless some contemporary subduer of many wives in correct conjugal succession? The case is clearly a hopeless one, since technicalities alone are counted upon to delay our judge's decision and jury's verdict.

Yes, my task is accomplished; simply to trace through Dante, Goethe and Browning the growth in definiteness of our ideal of woman! Suppose, however, woman should in her newly-achieved independence of thought and feeling evolve an ideal of man! How would not we, misshapen things, hug the dark side of the street;—nay in our terror shrink to the proper size for quick refuge in mouse holes, not to say ant-hills! Ah! and what a glorious thing it would be if mankind instead of being elevated only by the magical power of men's idealizing of women—new blood, pearly blood such as Homer's gods had, being thus infused, to dilute for the next generation the coarser life-liquid in our veins:—if, instead of relying on this slow process, we had the power of *mutual* independent idealization at work upon us! What results might we not hope to see in our own day!

There is a very simple philosophy involved in the redemptive efficacy of idealization which the world witnesses in every age. Woman, let us say, has been ideal-

* Eph. v. 23.

ized by man. She accepts his ideal of her as what ought to be. Her love to him, her need of reality compels her to become (not by effort of sheer will, but chiefly in a quiet, unconscious way) all that this ideal sets before her. The man worships his ideal, which he knows is not actual in himself, as given "a habitation and a name" in her; and so, worshipping whole-heartedly what he now believes to be real, because attached, maybe illusively, to her, it comes to be real in him; he is as man bound by the spell which as "dreamer of dreams" he cast upon her.

Why can not the same process, initiated by woman, work simultaneously with the one just described? Has it not already begun? Long ages in the secrecy of home-life and heart-love has it been active. But what remains unexpressed in Art's beautiful form is lacking its chief auxiliary. Let woman stop thinking and feeling, and praying holy prayer in secret. Let us hear a very certain voice. Let us know what it is she wants. Let her create beautiful poems, or paintings, or symphonies to suggest it. Let her stretch forth her hand with the wand of white magic and touch man with it, and this wand of poesy—not she—availing itself of natural law, will transmute man from copper to gold in more wonderful fashion than any alchemist dreamed, peering at sunset over his apparatus into the western skies. Then lilyhood shall not be merely feminine any more. Then there shall be no choice between sexes of either, God himself having finally chosen both.

I. LEOPARDI AND EVOLUTIONAL PESSIMISM.

An unshakable confidence in the human mind as a trustworthy and adequate instrument for the discovery of truth must lie, of course, at the basis of all valid science and philosophy whatsoever. To attempt to eliminate every sentiment from our solution of the problem presented by the co-existence of ourselves and the world of stimuli, has, we feel, been futile, as might indeed have been foreseen. The validity of our rational nature is no less questionable than that of our emotive nature, and it is now clear that only their healthy co-operation, for which their mutual esteem is indispensable, can bring man to the highest and happiest state.

We owe much to those who in the last three centuries have striven to consider the world dispassionately, and to follow humbly the paths of speculation indicated by the facts, proceeding only so fast as the facts seemed to urge. To do this it was necessary that the mind should be freed from prepossessions, from the powerful bias given it by theories and beliefs which had consulted rather the wishes of man than his actual experience. It was rightly judged that the clue to the external labyrinth must be sought for *in itself*.

Unfortunately all protestants end in being dogmatists quite as thorough-going and intolerant as those against whom they protested as tyrannical—if,

indeed, not more so. Having won their independence, the physical scientists propose now in their turn to dictate terms of submission. They abandon their original contention. The world was most likely to yield its own explanation. The mind of man, however, is to find its explanation *not in itself*, but in an alien world of mass and motion! The tables are turned; the once oppressed becomes oppressor. But we fancy that this state can not long continue. If it be true, as Mr. Spencer admits, that matter and spirit are alike unknowable, not to the advantage of matter; and as Mr. Fiske assures us, that what we only know immediately and certainly is the *self*, the person; then if we are to transcend phenomena at all, it would seem that the unknown reality might to better advantage be symbolized (felt, perhaps, if not thought) as eternal person than as unthinking impersonal mechanism.

At all events it is well for us to remember—both those who admit and those who do not admit the justice of the extravagant claims of some evolutionists*—that according to their doctrine our faculties have become what they are by use; that the fashioner of them has been vital necessity. Truth then can get no higher authority than Good. That is ultimately true to us which to believe true conduces to the preservation of the race, so that the question as to the truth of the mechanical theory,

* Since this part of the paper was written the writer has read "The Foundation of Belief," by the Rt. Hon. Arthur James Balfour (Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1895), and would in particular like to call attention to the eloquent paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 29.

according to such evolutionists, must be: "does the acceptance of it (complete and consistent) tend to increase the chances for life of social man?"

The emotions are the language of value. Nothing *is* for man until it has found its emotional equivalent. Good is "good," because it is conceived to bring "good." Now, there are certain persistent wants of the soul—wants which become acuter with what we are pleased to call the progress of civilization. If man believed that science must force him to starve these wants—that science will arrest his advance by bringing about the atrophy of what faculties he most prizes in himself—what perverse madness could enlist him in its laborious service? Did he believe Truth to be an anthropophagous fiend, would man, could man, pursue him to his den with infinite pains? Does not Lotze* speak the plain truth when he says: "If the object of all human investigation were to produce in cognition a reflection of the world as it exists, of what value would be all its labor and pains, which could result only in *vain* repetition, in an imitation within the soul of that which *exists* without it? What significance could there be in this barren rehearsal? What should oblige thinking minds to be mere mirrors of that which does not think unless the discovery of *truth* were in all cases likewise the production of some *good*, valuable enough to justify the pains expended in attaining it? The individual,

* See page 9 of Author's Introduction to the "Microcosmus: an Essay concerning Man and his relation to the World." By Hermann Lotze. Translated from the German by Elizabeth Hamilton and E. E. Constance Jones; Scribner & Welford, New York, 1888. The italics are not the author's.

ensnared by that division of intellectual labor that inevitably results from the widening compass of knowledge, may at times forget the connection of his narrow sphere of work with the great ends of human life; it may at times seem to him as though the furtherance of knowledge for the sake of knowledge were an intelligible and worthy aim of human effort. But all his endeavors have in the last resort but this one meaning, that they, in connection with those of countless others, should combine to trace an image of the world from which we may learn *what we have to reverence as the true significance of existence*, what we have to *do*, and what to *hope*. . . . Whenever any scientific revolution has driven out old modes of thought, the new views that take their place must justify themselves by the permanent or increasing satisfaction which they are capable of affording those *spiritual demands which can not be put off or ignored*."

It is with a more or less conscious sense of this need of self-justification that attempts are made every now and then to furnish substitutes for old faiths which science conceives itself to have made impossible. One can not but observe that in this field of the apologetics of science the commonest and most luxuriant growths are equivocations more or less subtle. For the great multitudes, life must be miserable if the race is to go forward; the comfort of the majority can be purchased only at the cost of general degeneracy. Men therefore are robbed of any ignorant hope of better times in the near future. There must of necessity steal over the man, who does not take for granted that he is an exception, a sense of the questionable worth of life for himself. And

if he should conceive himself fortunate, he would, in proportion to his nobility, never be able to reconcile himself to the failure of so many others.

The sole purpose of this preliminary discussion has been to indicate how little the Evolutional Philosophy has yet done to justify itself by supplying mind and heart with true peace.* Sneers at sentimentality will not answer, for, from its own account of the mental faculties of man, has not the very distinction between "truth" and "falsehood" imported in the first a power to keep alive? The philosophy which shall give its adherents the best chance of survival in the struggle for existence is the only ultimately true one, since it must eventually prevail. Is it not fair to ask: Does this Evolutional Philosophy liberate a current of vitality? Does it, or does it not "fit the average man to live?" If this question be deemed a fair one, the reader will not feel that he is being inopportunately presented with an account of Leopardi's poetry.

For the facts of the poet's pitiful career he may be referred to the pleasing essay of Mr. Howells.† Still, let it be observed that what seems to the present writer most noteworthy is not that he was diseased in body, unfortunate in more respects than one, given no scope for his marvelous powers; but that while

* By Evolutional Philosophy is understood throughout this paper all systems that insist on explaining the universe physical and spiritual as *one* continuous growth from *one* beginning; so that mind must look for its credentials to its source—unthinking processes.

† "Modern Italian Poets, Essays and Versions." By W. D. Howells. New York. Harper & Bros., 1887. Essay vii., p. 248.

many men experience all this more or less, so acute a mind as Leopardi's, who anticipated the attitude to man of the Evolutional Philosophy, found no consolatory compensations. As a matter of fact the instinctive love of life is with most men so strong that they find themselves unable to accept practically the pessimism which may and does logically follow from their philosophy. It hardly seems fair to derive Leopardi's pessimism from his misfortunes. Many men under circumstances quite as adverse, thanks to another theory of life, traditionally or rationally held, have been optimists. What makes the case of Leopardi particularly interesting is that it was apparently uncomplicated with moral laxity as that of Heine; that the love of life being all but wholly neutralized by ever present pain and disappointment, he was able to accept entire the practical pessimism of his philosophy; that his ingenuous simplicity and directness, his artistic desire for the beautiful, tended to make him think nobly of man's possibilities; that he was obliged to put the fullest possible strain upon his philosophy for comfort, since he was deprived of almost every other source, except a few devoted friendships; that he was content with no evasions, however specious, and demanded either that he should be comfortless, or that his comfort should be consistent with his philosophy.

Of course Leopardi derived his mechanical theory of the universe solely from the new astronomy and only anticipated the conclusions of biology without any knowledge of the argument that has since led up to them. The reader will not be surprised to find that his poetry does not always put the case as

strongly as one might conceive it to be put to-day. Sometimes our poet is irresistibly driven to doubt his radical conclusions, when, had he lived later he would have felt no scruple. For instance, on one occasion he exclaims: "O Human Nature, if thou be altogether frail and vile, dust and shadow, how is it thou art capable of such lofty sentiments? and if thou be noble in part, how then is it that thy worthier impulses and thoughts can be by such slight and base causes kindled in turn and quenched?" ("Sopra il ritratto di una bella donna," l. 50.)

We are convinced, do what we will, that whatever ulterior ends may or may not be subserved by our existence, it is immediately for our own sakes (the sake of us as individuals, or as societies) that we live. And yet Leopardi observes "that man is born to burden-bearing, and birth is danger of death; his first experience, suffering and torture; and from the beginning father and mother set about to console him for being born." (Canto notturno, l. 40.) All feel alike the need of happiness, yet our miseries have the inveterate objectivity of the landscape, while our happiness (dubitable experience that it is) resembles the varying illumination of that landscape. For "all is mysterious except our suffering" (Ultimo canto di Saffo, l. 45), while "deliverance from anguish constitutes for us delight." (La quiete dopo la tempesta, l. 41.) And yet we must seek pleasures, of which unconscious quest our vital hopefulness is the witness, until it abandons us, as we leave youth behind.

"What boundless thoughts, what dreams ecstatic did once the sight inspire of that far sea, of those azure hills I hence discern, which some day I then

thought to traverse; imagining worlds beyond them, worlds veiled in mystery, in which my life should taste mysterious delights." (*Le ricordanze*, l. 17.) But all such boyish expectations are foredoomed to disappointment. "Is this the world, are these the pleasures, the love, the achievements, the events of which we discoursed so much together? Is this the fate of human creatures?" (*A Silvia*, l. 55.) Personifying, in spite of himself, he complains, "Oh Nature, Nature, wherefore dost thou not afterward grant what thou then didst promise? Why practice such frauds upon thy children?" (*A Silvia*, l. 28.) "It pleased thee that our youthful hope should be deluded by life; of miseries full is the sea of years; of ills the only end is death." (*Sopra un basso rilievo*, l. 59.) Ay, as the setting moon that leaves the nightly landscape to its mournful monotony, "so youth vanishes, and forsakes mortal life; the shadows are put to flight, and all hours of illusive joy; far away shrink hopes, whereon our mortal nature leans, and life is left forlorn and in the gloom." (*Il Tramonto della luna*, l. 20.) To this topic Leopardi reverts so often with such pathos that I can not refrain from quoting once more: "O Hopes, my Hopes, illusions exquisite of my first years! Say what I will, I come back at length to you. In spite of the lapse of time and all change of affections and of thought, I can not forget you. Phantasms, I know, are glory and honor; empty self-deceit all pleasures and joys; and life is without fruit—a useless misery. Though so blank my years are all, and though so void, obscure, my mortal lot, full well I know that fortune robs me but of little. Yet, yet at times, I think again of you, O my old

Hopes; and of those dear first imaginative flights; then casting a look on my abject life so full of pain, and seeing that death is all that is now left me of expectations once so vast, my heart becomes oppressed, and to my fate I can not wholly reconcile myself. And when at length this death so much desired shall be at hand, and the end has come of my ill destiny, when earth shall be to me a valley estranged, and from my sight the future will fly, surely memories of you, my Hopes, will visit me, and that sweet vision will force from me a sigh, will make it bitter to have lived in vain, and will mingle a sense of sorrow with the delight of dying." (*Le ricordanze*, l. 76.) Labor is full of desire for rest, and, comparing the destiny of man with that of the dumb friends he domesticates and tyrannizes over—how strange: "O flock of mine, taking thy rest, happy, I fancy in that thou art unaware of thy miserable state! What envy of thee I feel, not only because thou dost escape almost all sense of trouble, and that wants, hurts, and quick fears are at once forgotten as soon as over, but because thou feelest no vexed sense of weariness; while if I lie at rest, a feeling of the insipidity of life assails me!" (*Canto notturno*, l. 105.) "Maybe had I the wings wherewith to fly above the clouds, tell the stars in turn, or fare from peak to peak as doth the thunder, happier should I be, O my dear flock; happier, O dear Moon! Or maybe, my thought forsakes the truth when viewing the lot of others; maybe in all forms, in all states, in savage lair or cradle, fraught with ill is the day of birth to whosoe'er is born." (*id.*, l. 135.)

Observe as a confirmation of the disappoint-

ment commonly experienced in realized rest, that to the unsophisticated village folk Saturday, not Sunday, is the day of days. "This of the seven is the most delightful day, full of hope and joy: to-morrow the idle hours will bring sadness and sensible tedium, and to his wonted toil each will, in thought, return." (Sabato del villaggio, l. 38.) The comforts that men have drawn from the imagination are more and more unavailable. "The Truth, so soon as it appears, forbids our access to thee, O beloved Imagination; and from thee our mind is being forever estranged; the years undermine thy once stupenduous power; and dead is now the comfort of our woes." (Ad Angelo Mai, l. 100.) At a moment of enthusiasm in spring he cries: "O lovely Nature, hearken the tale of the aching cares, the ignoble doom of mortals, and restore to my spirit also the bygone fire; *if* thou dost indeed *live*, *if* aught at all there *be* dwelling in heaven, or on the sunny earth, or in the deep sea's bosom, not pitiful, but at least *conscious* of our woes." (Alla primavera, l. 88.) If nature then can be said to have any aims (for aims presuppose consciousness, reason, and will) "in all she does, other objects than our good or ill hath she" (Sopra un basso rilievo, l. 108), for not of our *well being* has Nature been solicitous, but merely of our *being*; she cares for nothing else than our preservation, even if she preserve us unto woe." (Il risorgimento, l. 121.) The personification, involved in these apostrophies to nature, which in English require the capitalization of the word, is evidently but a rhetorical device, a habit surviving the modes of thought that originated and justified it.

There remain only two always accessible sources

of joy, and one is the beauty of external nature. Let this passage suffice: "At times I sit alone upon a little hill at the edge of a lake encircled with its crown of silent trees. There, when he has reached his noon in heaven, the sun paints his own still image, and no blade of grass, no leaf ruffles in the wind; the water ripples not, no locust rattles, no bird on bough stirs feather, no butterfly flits lightly; nor sound nor motion, nigh or far, is heard or seen. Most absolute peace holds all, so that I, sitting motionless, almost forget myself and the world about; already I feel as though my body lay at rest, no spirit, no conscious sense stirs it any longer, and its antenatal quiet mingles with the silence of the scene." (*La vita solitaria*, l. 22.) But we become, Leopardi notes, less and less sensitive to nature's beauty; for this very appreciation belongs, as Wordsworth well perceived, to youth. "Blessed a thousand times, is he who loses not with lapse of years the fading powers of dear imaginings; to whom fate gave the boon of keeping ever fresh his heart's first youth." (*Al conte carlo Pepoli*, l. 110.) For himself he anticipates no such unusual good fortune. "When this heart shall have grown wholly hard and cold, when neither the serene and sunny smile of these solitary fields, nor the spring song of birds at early morn, nor the dumb moon, under a limpid sky o'er hills and vales, shall move me any more; when dead and mute for me both nature's beauty, and art's shall have become, and every noble thought, all tender affections shall be strange and quite unknown; then seeking my own consolation, I shall elect other pursuits less sweet wherewith to intrust the loathed remainder of my life." (*id.*, l. 126.) Evidently, how-

ever, the search for speculative truth to which he promised final devotion leaves the heart unsatisfied, nay, with his point of departure, must end in its bankruptcy." "Whither are gone our fascinating dreams of unknown refuges, of inhabitants unknown, of the daily hostelry of the stars, and the remote bed of the virgin dawn, and of the nightly sleep of the great sun? Lo, they in one instant were dispelled, and outlined in a small chart lies the world: Lo, all things alike! New discovery extends only the limits of the non-existent." (Ad Angelo Mai, l. 91.) The truth which his philosophy sets before him, must be qualified as "unpropitious," "cruel," "merciless," and loyalty to it is a sort of magnanimous fanaticism akin to suicide.

There is one other source of joy always accessible, and that is love. "For him who understands love's nature, it is a spur to noble deeds." (Nelle nozze della sorella, l. 45.) But there are the bodily separations, as well as those of the heart. Death steps in between lovers, in the end; and while together, this mysterious third is always near. Besides, in his poem, "Amore e morte," he sets forth poetically a doctrine of the inevitable association of love and death. Whenever one feels a great thrill of elevating passion, a perfect fearlessness comes over one; indeed, a sort of courting of extinction supplants the usual love of life. Hence, he would deduce that death is a higher destiny. He resolves, "Let me cast away every hope with which the world, in children's company, finds comfort; nor expect at any time aught else but Thee; await serenely that day when I shall lay my head to sleep upon thy virgin breast." (l. 117.)

And yet he is sorely perplexed when he contemplates his conclusion. Why should death, if the normal end and aim of life, be made naturally horrible? "The only refuge from ills—death—this inevitable end, this law immutable, thou hast set for man's career. Wherefore, alas, after aching ways, at least not have ordained a pleasing goal? Instead, why is it that she whom we have ever before our souls as a certainty while we live, whom thou hast appointed sole comforter of our woes, is by thee cloaked in black draperies, surrounded with shadows so sad? Wherefore have shown us a haven more terrible to view than any seas?" (*Sopra un basso rilievo*, l. 62.) Besides, we find ourselves, with all our philosophic idolatry of death, unable to wish it to others, particularly to the young. "If it be ill for the immature to die, wherefore allot it to beings innocent? If it be good, wherefore make such departure seem to him who leaves, and to him who stays alive, the most terrible of ills?" (*id.*, l. 49.) "If it be truth, as I can not but firmly believe, that life is a misfortune and death a blessing, yet who can ever wish for those he loves (as undoubtedly he ought) that their last day would hasten?" (*id.*, l. 82.)

Let us summarize what has been shown in these copious excerpts. Life is, for the seekers of pleasure at least, predominantly painful. One of the great sources of joy, the capacity to imagine and believe truth such as we wish, is gone. To see purpose in nature, is to personify what is, so far as we can tell, impersonal. As resulting "from every thing in heaven and on earth, whirling without rest, always to return thither whence it came, I can conceive of no use or fruit." (*Canto notturno*, l. 94.) Beauty of nature is

no permanent consoler, because our sensitiveness to it diminishes with time. Driven inward, we find that the indulging of reason to the utmost, ends in the sterilization and paralysis of the heart. Love, the great source of joy, is made by death in itself uncertain; and death is odious for self, piteous in others, do what we will. We can not derive any pleasure or comfort from a consideration of it as love's inevitable end.

Is it strange if, from all this, there should emerge a species of Nihilism—for what other name shall be given to it? Consciousness is the evil, since its object must be always evil. Driven inward and upward by the sense of the insufficiency of the world, and the insignificance of self, he perceives that it is thought-power alone, absorption in an idea that can deliver one from this oppressive misery. “What world is it, what unexplored immensity, what paradise whither this thy miraculous spell oft seems to lift me? Where, wandering in other than this usual light, my earthly state I utterly forget, and the whole body of fact! Such are, I must believe, the dreams of the immortals. Ah, after all, dear Thought, art thou not for the most part a dream wherewith truth arrays herself for beauty's sake? Dream? yea, an evident falsehood!—but thou, among delight-giving falsehoods art of divine nature, since so vital and strong that thou dost obstinately hold thine own against truth, ay, and take her place:—nor art thou dispelled, ere in death's arms we sleep.” (*Il pensiero dominante*, l. 100.)

For the complete enjoyment of this refuge from reality, this exercise of tyrannous thought-powers, the extinction of all emotions and desires is requisite;

a scorn of all that seems as if it would still detain the soul. "Now, O tired heart of mine, rest shalt thou have forever. The last illusion, the belief that I am deathless, is utterly dead. Well I know that not only the hope, but the desire for all dear deceits is extinct. Rest thou forever! Throbbled hast thou over-much. Nothing deserves to move thee, nor of thy sigh is the earth worthy. Bitterness, tediousness make up our life—never aught else,—and the world—mere mire! Henceforth be still. Despair thy last. For to our race fate gave one only gift—death. Now, therefore, scorn at length thyself, nature, the brute Power which to the common harm bears occult sway, and of all that is the infinite vanity!" (*A se stesso.*)

After such a radical extirpation of the heart's desires, such a total denial of the ever-living Maya, he is well prepared to indulge that great thirst for the Absolute, to think on and on till he pass beyond the reach of wing-weary self-consciousness and have pierced into a luminous blackness—black for sheer excess of light, and "thus, in the midst of this immensity my thought is drowned, and shipwreck in such sea to me is sweet." (*L'infinito*, l. 13.)

I have consciously disregarded every thing like chronological order in these extracts. The poems seem to have a central unity—a consistency—that can have resulted only from an inveterate hold on one philosophy. Unless we were definitely informed, it would be difficult to decide from internal evidence upon any order of composition whatever. In any case Leopardi's poems are before us and constitute, what is certainly rare, a logical whole.

Leopardi's attitude toward his age does not sur-

prise us. I fancy he would have assumed much the same attitude toward any age. "The great and rare is counted folly," he says to his friend Angelo Mai (l. 145). He says to his sister, "We scorn virtue while alive, adore her when dead" (*Nelle nozze della sorella*, l. 31). He complains "that even the reward of mere glory is denied to worthy pursuits." Wiser than Mr. Swinburne, we think, he dreams of no divine democracy: "Power and rule, as much concentrated or as much subdivided as may be, whoever is invested with them, under whatever name, will abuse to the end of time." (*Palinodia*, l. 78.)

His views on the reconstruction of ethics and politics along scientific lines are all definitely stated in "*La Ginestra*," probably his noblest poem. To combat the charges brought against his poetry, as poetry, seems superfluous. Even his heaviest didactic paragraphs are lifted by an eloquent despair, an onrush of passion into a domain far removed from that of prose. His periods roll on with the fury of a torrent that sweeps all before it. The latent agonizing love of truth, beauty, goodness; the severity of his mood; the sudden illuminative flashes of imagination; the use of nature as a text to every spiritual homily, not chosen to fit the homily, but truly the source of it; all this and more would, it seems, set above the reach of carping criticism the work of this Italian quite as surely as one could wish. The translations in this paper have been faithful in the main, but of course utterly inadequately to the purpose (which has not been the writer's) of the vindication of Leopardi's poetry, as poetry. But, because of the preëminent importance of the poem just alluded to above, a version has

been made of it, foregoing all attempts at rhyme, and simply studying to render, if possible, the sense, giving at the same time some impression of the style: its inversions, its periodical structure, its sententious concision, its impressive severity.*

LA GINESTRA.†

On the arid shoulder here
Of the formidable mount
Vesuvius, fierce destroyer,
Which else of neither tree is cheered, nor flower,
Thou scatterest thy solitary shrubs,
Sweet-smelling Broom,
Content with wildernesses. Thee I saw
With thy sprays gracing also the waste lands
Which girdle the city round
That once of man was queen,
And with their staid appearance taciturn
To the passerby seemed to bear witness
And make memorial of her empire lost.
Now once again, lover of sorrowful sites
Forsaken, of broken fortunes comrade true,
I view Thee on this soil. These fields
With ashes unproductive strewn,
Mantled with indurate lava,
Under the wanderer's footsteps resonant,
Where finds the snake his nest
And writhes in the sun, and where returns

* A version of Leopardi's best poems has been published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1887. Mr. Frederick Townsend, however, can not be at all relied upon for the philosophic passages. He paraphrases recklessly and often makes sentimental nonsense of what in the original is stern sense. Cf. *To Himself*, p. 124, with Mr. Howells' admirably faithful version in "*Modern Italian Poets*," p. 263.

† Lest some reader ask himself: "Who is la Ginestra? Some famous opera singer?" let me here translate it: "broom, or golden furze."

The rabbit to his wonted hollow lair,
Were once blithe rural homes, plowed ground
Golden with wheat ears, loud
With lowing of herds;
Gardens and palaces
For the great a refuge pleasurable
Of idle ease; cities far-famed
Once stood which the fierce mount
With fiery torrents from his fulminant mouth
Along with their indwellers whelmed.
One common desolation all enfolds
Where thou, O gracious Flower, dost stand,
And sendest, as though of others' ruin piteous,
To heaven incense of most sweet fragranc
The waste wild comforting. These scenes let him
Visit whose use 't is to extol
Our lot with praise; let him take note
For *our* race how solicitous
Fond Nature is; and the vast might here
With equitable measure can he mete
Of that humanity, which, with slight stir
When danger least is feared,
A heartless foster-mother in part extirpates,
And with some motion little less light
Is able utterly to annihilate.
In these realms stand depicted
Of our human generations
The magnificent progressive destinies!

Look hither! here glass thyself.
Arrogant, fatuous Age,
That didst the path forsake—till then
By thought reanimate beckoned on—
And tracing back thy steps
Dost boast of thy retreat
Proclaiming it advance!
To thy child's play all gifted souls
Whose hostile fate made thee
Their parent, tribute of worship pay,
Tho' at times, among themselves
They make of thee their jest.

Not I shall go down to my grave thus shamed ;
 A light task 't were for me
 After the rest to pattern, and,
 Raving in manner set,
 Make to thine ear my song acceptable.
 But I choose rather that the full disdain
 Which in my heart is pent
 Have utterance as open as may be.
 Albeit most well I know
 Whoever to his own age proves
 O'ermuch distasteful, soon is quenched
 By dull oblivion ! Of which curse
 That I must share with thee,
 Till now have I made merry !
 Thou dreamest of freedom still
 And wouldst at the self-same time
 Have Thought be slave again ;—
 To which alone 't is due if we have risen
 Partly from savagery, with whose sole aid
 Our culture waxes, which conducts alone
 Our public fortunes forth
 To better things. Thus did the truth
 Displease thee, which the bitter lot
 Taught, and the station low
 Assigned to us by Nature ; for this cause
 Basely didst turn thy back
 On the light that made it clear ;
 And thou—a runagate—
 Callest *him* base, who doth pursue
 The light ;—and only him great-souled
 Who, flouting himself, or others, fool or knave,
 Above the stars our mortal rank exalts !

A man that's destitute, with limbs
 Infirm,—but lofty soul well-born,—
 Nor vaunts, nor fancies himself
 In gold rich, or robust ;
 To opulent living, among the throng,
 And valorous person, makes
 No farcical pretense ;
 But lets, without false shame, appear

His lack of strength and wealth ; in open speech
Of them makes mention, and of his state
With truth accordant shapes his estimate.
A foolish creature,—not magnanimous,—
Do I deem him, who, born
To perish and in suffering reared,
Should say “for pleasure was I framed,”
And with offensive arrogance
Fill volumes ; loftiest destinies
And novel felicities—
Whereof not our planet alone
But the whole heavens know nought,—
Pledging to a race whom a wave
Of storm-stirred sea, a breath
Of air malignant, a subterranean shock,
So utterly destroys
That with great difficulty
Their memory persists.
A noble nature hath
Who dares to lift against
The common doom his mortal eye,
And with frank phrases,—nought from the truth
Deducting—the ills that make our fate
Acknowledges, and our low station frail ;
Who shows himself great, valiant
In suffering ; nor augments
With fratricidal hates and wraths
(Than other ills more grievous) his distress ;
Nor holds man answerable
For what he suffers, but assigns
To Her the blame ; who is indeed
Guilty :—as to birth mother, but
In heart, stepmother of mankind !
Her he calls Foe ; and thinking
(As is most true) human society
Originally in martial order drawn
Her to oppose, confederate he esteems
All men, encircling them with love sincere ;
Offering, and looking for returns
Of potent and prompt aid
In alternate perils, in the pains

Of common warfare. His right hand
To arm against offending fellow-man,
To fetter his neighbor, or in his path
Set hindrances, he folly deems:
As 't would be in a camp
Besieged by hostile armies when the assault
Is at its hottest, forgetful of the foe,
To start a bitter feud among one's friends;
To let the sword flash bare,
Flight-spreading, among one's brothers in arms!
Thoughts such as these
When they have grown (as once they were)
Familiar to the masses; when the fear,
That first in social ties knit men,
By veritable science is in part
Brought back; then honorable
And noble citizen-intercourse,
Equity and sweet mercy, another root
Will have obtained than fables insolent,
Founded whereon the popular probity
Is wont to stand erect as safe
As can aught that is propped up by a lie.

Ofttimes o'er these ravaged tracts
Which the congealed flood cloaks somberly
Swelling as tho' in billows it did roll,
I sit me down at night
And watch the stars, out of the blue
Of purity absolute on high,
Dart on the melancholy heath their fires,
(Which afar off the smooth sea mirroreth);
And all about, o'er the whole hollow heaven,
The Universe with sparkles scintillate.
And when my eyes I raise
To fix those lights that to their view
Show as mere dots, yet are so vast
That measured by them earth and sea
Are but a dot indeed; to which
Not merely man, but this world-globe,
Whereon man is as naught,
Is utterly unknown; and when

I gaze upon those knots of clustering stars
Beyond all measure more remote,
That unto us as mists appear, by which
Not man, nor the mere earth, but all—
(For number infinite and for mass—
Our golden sun included) all the stars
We see are unsuspected, or appear
To them, as they to earth: a point
Of nebulous brilliancy;—what then
Seemest thou to my mind,
O child of man? Remembering, in turn,
Thy state below, well set forth by the soil
I tread; how nevertheless
Thou dost believe thyself
Lord, and appointed End for all that is!
How often thou wast pleased to feign
Upon this obscure grain of sand minute
Called earth, because of thee
The Framers of the Universe descended
Frequent converse pleasurable to hold
With some of thine;—and how, renewing
Such fatuous dreams, insulted are the wise
Even by this present Age
Which seems for knowledge to outtop
And civil manners all times hitherto—
What feeling then, unhappy mortal race
What thought of thee at last my heart assails?
I know not if contempt or pity 't is prevails!

As from a tree drops a dwarf apple down
Which toward the Autumn's close
No other power but its own ripeness flings
To earth; and, in its fall, the precious homes
Of some ant-people, tunneled in soft turf
At cost of infinite toil, it crushes, depopulates;
And the labors, and the ample store
Assiduously collected by that folk,
With provident strain, prolonged
Throughout the summer season, in one instant
Buries;—so from the thunderous womb
Hurled to the heavens profound

A night and ruin—compact
Of ashes, cinders, rocks, with seething streams
Dilute—that fell as a leaden hail ;—
Or, a vast flood of bowlders, liquefied
Metals, and molten sand
Hissing adown the mountain's grassy flanks,
Wasted, destroyed, and whelmed
In a few seconds, the cities which the sea
Bathed on her farther shore ;
And here now over them goats browse,
While cities new rise on the other side,
For which the buried make
Foundations firm ; and the steep mount
Spurns with its trampling foot the prostrate walls.
Nature nor venerates, nor hath in care
Man more than ant ; and, if more rare
Be the slaughter of man than ant
Unto no other cause 't is due
But that less numerous is man's progeny !

Full eighteen centuries have sped
Since, by fire's violence oppressed,
Vanished these populous seats ; but still
The humble peasant who his vineyard tends,
Who in these fields with difficulty
By the dead and cindered soil is fed,
Lifts a suspicious eye
Up to the fatal peak, which no whit tamed,
Yet sits terrific, threatens yet
Ruin to him, his sons,
And their scant patrimony. Oftentimes
The wretch upon the roof
Of his rustic cot, the whole night long will lie
Sleepless in the wandering airs ;
And leap up more than once
The course of the dread seething mass to explore
That pours adown the sandy back
Forth from the exhaustless hollow gorge,
With whose reflected glow
Gleams the sea beach of Capri, Naples' port,
And Mergellina. Should he see

It drawing nigh, or in the depths
Of his own well hear the water gurgle hot—
His sons he rouses, in all haste his wife,
And fleeing with whatever they can snatch
Of their poor property, they watch from far
Their wonted dwelling, and the little field,
Their sole defense from famine, fall a prey
To the prowling flood inexorable,
That crackles as it reaches them, and spreads
Stiffening forever over all.

To the rays of heaven is restored,
After age-long oblivion, dead Pompeii,
Like an interrèd skeleton
By piety or greed exhumed.
And, from the desolate forum,
Standing among the files
Of columns truncated, the traveler
A long while contemplates
That mount with its twin peaks,
The smoking crest that still
Threatens the scattered ruins.
And, in the horror of night's secrecy,
Over the vacant amphitheaters
And toppled temples and the houses wrecked,
Where hides the bat her young,
Like to a dismal torch
That circles ominously
Through empty palaces
The dazzling glare of the funereal lava
Flies, lurid in the glooms afar,
And tinges all the landscape round.
So, ignorant of man,
Of the stretch of times he ancient deems,
Of the substitution regular
Of child for sire—Nature alone
Stands still in youth, or moves
Along a road of so great sweep
That motionless she seems. Meanwhile,
Fall kingdoms, peoples pass, and tongues
Whereof no note she takes—

But *Man*, dares arrogate—
The glory, for himself, of endless days!
And thou, slow-flowering Broom
That with thy perfumed sprays
Adornest these marred lands,
Thou, too, soon must succumb
To the subterranean fires,
Which visiting once again
Places familiar grown,
Will spread out their consuming skirts
Over thy gentle shrubs:
And thou wilt bow thine innocent head,
Not vainly stubborn, under the load of death;
Yet not ere then, shall it be bent
In futile supplication cowardly
Unto thy future slayer; neither self-lifted
With insane pride, unto the stars;
Nor above the waste—where not thy choice
But fate decreed thee birth and dwelling place;
Yet, wiser, yea so much less weak, than man
In that thou'st not believed thy feeble kind
Rendered by fate, or thee imperishable!

Leopardi's like shall never be again. We are sorry, and yet we are glad. Even his natural enemies must forgive him for existing, since he is alone of his curious class. Most of us feel at least remotely akin to him, however, and admire ourselves for our rare, not to be duplicated poet-relative. Matthew Arnold offers opportunities of clever comparison. So does Heine. But Leopardi alone is Leopardi, and if we want to embrace all things nobly human, whether glad or sad, we shall be obliged to spend a little hour of devotion at his private shrine.

II. "OBERMANN," OF SENANCOUR, AND MATTHEW ARNOLD; OR, MORALS DIVORCED FROM THEOLOGY.*

Surely no one that knows Matthew Arnold as poet, critic, theological amateur, and political freelance can accuse him seriously of having drawn his culture exclusively from one book. Who has oftener emphasized the value of wide reading? And yet there does seem to be great truth in the sweeping statement that every man, be his reading never so wide, can still point to a half-dozen men and books as the fashioners of his essential self. There may be many minor influences bearing with all their vigor upon his sensitive spirit, but above them there are some that direct the tendency of all; that serve as living centers of assimilation; that are the real architects of his genius at large, imposing on all acquired materials an individuality in virtue of their new relative worth and office in a vital whole. Thus we feel that Sophocles rather than Æschylus was master-poet for Arnold, that Wordsworth, the placid and passionless, naturally outshone in his heaven of art, the electric, impulsive, far-sweeping Goethe.

Every student of Matthew Arnold must have felt the sweet necessity of his poetry as a genuine expression of soul. Various estimates of his achieve-

* The translations in the present paper are made from the well known edition of Senancour's "Obermann," with a preface by George Sand, published by Charpentier, Paris.

ment exist, to be sure. Some people prefer his prose to his verse, others extol his verse and condone his prose. One thing, however, is plain. The critic and poet in him are forever inseparable; different offices of one soul. Was not poetry to him creative criticism of life? Did he not hold that poetry is the judge of civilization, in showing up the eternally beautiful, and setting side by side with it, either in the poem itself, or, at least, by suggestion in the mind of the intent reader, all that in the actual is unlovely, unsound, impure, and in need of radical reform—thus censuring it, shaming it, and imposing upon it the doom of the world's eternal scorn?

This unity of poet and critic can not but have suggested to the reader of Arnold the fact that *Obermann*, so affectionately praised by him, exercised no inconsiderable influence upon the man and the critic, because so dear to the poet in youth and mature years. It may have been an unconscious infiltration only, but it must have been important. Goethe, the critic, Wordsworth, the poet, both masters of themselves, and kings in divers ways of spiritual calm; Sophocles, the Olympian, and Homer, the unspeculatively serene, these helped him to attain what he so ardently craved of the stars—sublime self-independence, the power to do lofty duty without the sympathy of men. But, we can be sure—and to us, we dare say, it is comforting—this attainment was like that of Paracelsus, illusory. He who brought, at a decisive hour, this sympathy, who soothed his fever of bitter unrest, was *Obermann*, not they. Sainte Beuve may have been his master in criticism, but *Obermann* was an intimate, a brother in youth, a second, sweeter, never-forgotten self.

The present paper is not intended to be a dogmatic restatement, in perpetually varied terms, of the opinion that Senancour had a great share in the making of our poet and critic. It attempts a more modest but far more arduous task. In a series of selected morsels of *Obermann*, translated to give the intimate sense rather than to render the expression, this paper will attempt to furnish those who have not the opportunity, or leisure, of obtaining it for themselves, some evidence of the affinity we venture to affirm, and of the influence we would suggest as probable. We will not weary the reader with continual quotations from Arnold, or with repeated flashes of generalization more or less brilliant. On the whole, we shall confine ourselves to Senancour and his marvelous *Obermann*.

As the reader is doubtless aware, the object of our present scrutiny is a collection of letters purporting to be those of a spirit astray, perplexed, but fully conscious of high capability and mission, to a friend, practical, happy in his home, genially conservative in faith and opinion. Such a collection of letters can not, of course, pursue one line of thought persistently; the two characteristic topics of the book are constantly interwoven. These we must artificially separate, so far as possible, to make them clear at the first glance, reminding the reader, however, that we are examining Obermann for evidence of his kinship with Arnold, and not attempting to criticize Senancour's work for its own sake. We should otherwise have to dwell on the grace and witchery of the style, the sweet suddenness of transition from nature to man and from man to nature; we should have to

reprehend all its didactic digressions as artistic blunders, as plains of prose among the highlands of poetry and sentiment, On the contrary, from these very digressions we shall have to draw largely, while what is best in the work must be dismissed with a few quotations at the close of our paper.

Obermann then deals with two great subjects ; the considerations of practical ethics and the need of their reconstruction occupy his mind ; his soul is engaged with the emanations of beauty from nature, those secret suggestions, not mechanically allegorical, but direct interferences with the spirit of man, experienced in the midst of mountains and valleys, forests, birds, and waters, and under the eternal sky. And so we find constant efforts at evolving some theory of the moral regeneration of mankind, which has become imperative because of the inroad made upon tradition by science and the spirit of individual liberty. We have equally frequent hints how to obtain the comfort of ever-present nature, not seen through frigid mythological media, but felt as a portion of ourselves, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, spirit of our spirit—twin births, man and nature—the conscious and unconscious—of the same universal mother. Both these phases of the work might be separately found elsewhere, but their fusion, so intimate and significant, is what constitutes Obermann's originality of attitude, and makes one feel that Arnold, whose life-work was also the manifestation and advocacy of these two phases of spiritual activity—(the one in his rationalized theology, the other in his literary essays, and both in his poetry—natural magic and moral profundity being always what he strove to enshrine in classic

verse)—bears to Obermann a striking likeness, not so much of feature as of expression.

To go honestly to work, let us, momentarily at least, forget all bias for or against Arnold, the teacher—to some an apostle, to some an apostate and perverter. We must remember, whatever our feelings, that he was in earnest, a seeker after the highest welfare of man; and that, on the other hand, like all men, even his virulent detractors, he was fallible, and, unlike many of them, well aware of his extreme human fallibility of mind and heart.

Wordsworth was the apostle of nature, and found in his mission all felicity. Not so Arnold:

Never by passion quite possessed,
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway.

Like Senancour, he sought sympathy and serene self-possession which were ever eluding his eager grasp. He had not taken the last step in buddhistic self-renunciation. He still desired Nirvana, and this one desire perturbed and tortured him, itself the obstacle in the way of its own realization:

Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

Let us compare further the last wish of Obermann with that of Arnold, to dispel what doubt remains:

“If I should attain to advanced age; if some day, still active in thought, all converse with man foregone, I have a friend by my side to receive my last farewell to earth, let my chair be set on the short grass, and let there be in front of me those quiet daisies, under the sun, under the immense heaven, so that, as I leave the life that perishes, I may find once more something of the old infinite illusion.”

Here follow Arnold's words :

— but let me be,
While all around in silence lies,
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes,
Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread—
The world which was ere I was born,
The world which lasts when I am dead ;
Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
Composed, refresh'd, ennobled, clear ;
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here !

Obermann had lost his belief in a mechanical providence. He was perplexed, as the Psalmist of old, that in the world virtue seems so often to suffer ; that, to quote his own words, at times, "even states perish for having failed to commit a crime." A world full of injustice, where crime does not bring punishment as surely as a violation of mechanical law, made him feel that spirit and matter are not in harmony, that spirit with its needs, is a solitary outcast in a universe which knows nothing of right and wrong. The dogmatic theorist who solves every difficulty so consistently and with such complacent assurance, revolts him utterly. "Whoever is in such startling accord with himself is either not sincere, or a dupe of his own system. He is playing a part." Theorists of "vigor and rigor" did not impose on him. He affirms the existence of practical dualism—believing a resolution of this dualism to be only possible to man illusively, each successive illusion having its own brief term. So he turns to man. Since nature does not re-

ward virtue, as such, nor punish vice, as such, there must be error in our conceptions of right and wrong, or their reward and punishment are to be sought in man, instead of in the outer world. Hence he first tries to give himself an account of what is not traditionally, but naturally right and wrong. And then perceiving that even now, with all corrections duly made, there is no certainty of justice in external life, he affirms that virtue is not a more or less painful means to the attainment of a hypothetical joy-giving end; that this has been an old, pernicious mistake to which is due very much of our despondency and, therefore, not a little of our depravity. On the contrary, virtue is itself, the end of a natural prepotent passion in men for righteousness, and, since an end *per se*, has a right to be considered a good without reference to any reward it may bring besides. Indeed, all goods resulting secondarily from virtue as a means, are secondary, adventitious, and would not be eagerly expected if men were normal and weighed probabilities without prejudice. To teach men not to count upon such accidental rewards of righteousness would greatly enhance their felicity. For if these secondary goods were not much sought, their partial presence or their absence would no longer produce a sense of disappointment and unfair treatment, which, reacting on the moral sense, so often tends to weaken the impulse to virtue in the unfortunate, because virtue comes to be regarded as lacking all natural sanctions and, therefore, as not endowed with the obligatoriness of law. Now religion, to be sure, has done its best to make men look for no rewards as due to right doing in this life—but it has promised them in another. And

the mistake has been to appeal to the imagination for rewards, instead of making virtue appear itself a good highly desirable, a noble reward of life-long effort. Attention should have been drawn to the fact of its fulfilling an eternal and supreme human want. An after-life has been imagined of adequate reward and punishment. If this was once a help to morals, we can state that it is becoming less potent as a motive for conduct, since mankind at large trusts the human imagination less and less, and actual cognition more and more. Besides, this method of immortal rewards and punishments is fatal to the dignity of virtue, degrading it to the rank of a means; furthermore, it vitiates the very essence of virtue itself. If good or evil lies in the motive of an act—as Jesus of Nazareth taught—then virtue for the sake of beatitude is not virtuous; it is selfish, grasping; egotism postponed to an imaginary hereafter; to use Matthew Arnold's excellent expression, it is not disinterested righteousness, but "other-wordliness."

Now Senancour continues to argue that in the downfall of false theologies there will be a breaking of barriers in morals, and a destructive flood of vice. This is to be avoided only by a timely divorce of ethics and superstition which shall leave the latter to its fate, proving morality to be quite independent of external stimulus,—since it has an internal motive force of its own, and at no time requires the mechanical, supercilious aid of the mythopoeic faculty. Thus the preacher's duty is not to preach a heaven and a hell in some doubtful hereafter, but to stir to conscious life the dormant craving for righteousness, to herald an actual this-life heaven of virtue; the supreme attain-

ment of the supreme end, which being within reach, independent of the unmoral world of mechanism, is positive, certain, practical, cognizable, and worth all peril and strain. In the stimulation of this passion for "order," or righteousness, lies the mission of the reformer, because in the dominance of his passion—with its satisfaction dependent only on the will of the individual—lies the secret of self-mastery, contentment, and peace.

On the other hand in nature we have an external pattern and guide, a repertory of maxims, a world of suggestion, a consoler in these times of transition from the old to the new morality :

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!

Clearness divine!

Ye heavens . . . remain

A world above man's head to let him see

.

How fair a lot to fill

Is left to each man still.

Let the lover of poetry pardon this garbling of the sublime close of Arnold's "Summer Night." Such is the significance of nature to Obermann—a feeder of the heart, a constant supplier of beautiful illusions to the effect that man (the moral being), and nature (the mechanical concourse of things), are somehow secretly in harmony, meaning in different words the same glorious thing, nature being full of man, in proportion as man at large becomes natural. But this becoming natural—one of the most constant thoughts of both Senancour and Arnold—can be understood in two distinct ways, as a recessional movement toward what man was before Christianity, and as a forward impulse in the direction of what man is to become

when, having outgrown accepted partial interpretations of Christ's message, he conforms more fully to the ideal presented by the New Testament to such as have open, spiritual eyes. Arnold could not, of course, with his sentiment of culture and history, hold the former of these views, which Senancour took from Rousseau and his own time. Herein lies their chief difference. Senancour's attitude is destructive, Arnold's reconstructive and progressive.

Obermann, however, does not approve of an ascetic withdrawal from society because it is not according to nature; such a withdrawal is itself unnatural.

"An isolated being is never perfect; his existence is incomplete; he is in truth neither happy nor good." (p. 275.)

Yet he perceives quite clearly the independence of man from society in the deeper sense.

"The real life of man is in himself; what comes to him from without is adventitious only, and secondary. The effect of things upon him depends far more upon the state in which they find him, than on their intrinsic nature. . . . Therefore at each and every moment of his life, what concerns a man supremely is to be what he should be." (p. 25.)

This importance of the moral man as the antagonist of fate is emphasized again and again.

"In things, we may be sure, no peace is to be found; let us look for it in our hearts. . . . Force is nature's law; will is the power of powers; energy in suffering is better than apathy in voluptuous delight. What we fear is vanity, what we desire is also vain. One thing only will be permanently good for us, to be what nature meant us to become." (p. 116.)

Now, according to Obermann, it is the province of ethical science to find just what is the intention of nature in respect to man ; hence its paramount importance among sciences.

“Since man is of little significance in nature, while to himself he is every thing, he ought to busy himself somewhat less with the laws of the world, and somewhat more with those of his own being ; ignore perhaps such sciences as are unpractical nor have ever dried a single tear in hamlet and in hovel ; ignore certain arts, maybe, admirable in themselves, but of no service ; deny himself all passions, heroic, no doubt, but fatal ; and strive instead, if it be possible, to establish institutions which restrain mankind yet cease to degrade him ; to have less learning and less ignorance ; and finally, if man is no mere blind center of reactionary energy which should be abandoned to the forces of destiny, if his conduct can be said to be in any sense free, proclaim at large that morals constitute the only science for man in the hands of human providence.” (p. 198.)

But together with this plea for the study of ethics, goes another for its purgation from traditional casuistry, and for bringing it nearer to its data :

“There is for us no other moral law than that of the heart of man, no other science or other wisdom than acquaintance with its needs, and a just estimate of the respective means to happiness. Turn away from useless science, supernatural systems, mystifying dogmas. Leave what is remote to superior or differently constituted intelligences ; what the intellect can not clearly discern, was not intended for its scrutiny.” (p. 117.)

The latter portion we understand in a relative sense only. He means no more than that a reasonable preference should be given to what is clearly seen over what can, at best, be surmised, and is, therefore, open to incalculable errors.

The consideration of the all-importance of ethics suggests, quite inevitably, a comparison of morality with religion, of the science of right and wrong and the disinterested art of doing right, with a system of beliefs which imposes indirectly a certain order of conduct :

“Morality, well understood by all, would make men very righteous, and, therefore, very kindly and very happy. Religion, which is a *less reasoned morality*, depending less on proof, appealing less to the immediate reasons of things, emphasized, enforced by divine sanctions—religion, if well understood, would make men perfectly pure.” (p. 237.)

It is, then, according to Obermann, not merely a question as to whether ethics, or what he calls religion, is easier to understand properly, but there is also a decided difference in results. The direct method produces an active, consciously attained righteousness, as a consequence of which we should have, thinks he, all kindliness and happiness, strength out of which should proceed sweetness ; by the emotional method of indirect attainment we have purity—absence of wrong—not necessarily vigor of character. Still, with this clear preference for the results attained by intelligent moral effort, he does not fail to recognize the worth of religion :

“I do not like to have men show intolerance against religion any more than in its favor. I approve

of its pronounced opponents as little as of its fanatic furtherers." (p. 230.)

And lest he should in any way be supposed to imply, in severe censure of false religion, any sympathy with iconoclastic aggressors upon Christianity, he returns to the subject several times :

"I admire religion when it is what it should be. I admire it as a great work. I dislike to have men, who rebel against religions, deny their beauty, failing to recognize or actually disowning the good those religions were intended to accomplish. These men are wrong. Good which has been done is less good, forsooth, because done in a manner not agreeable to their theory ! It is well enough to seek means of doing better with less ; but let all acknowledge the good which has been accomplished, for, after all, even when the worst has been said, a great deal of it has been done." (p. 237.)

"So far am I from cherishing a prejudice against Christianity, that I deplore, in a certain sense, what most of its zealots themselves hardly dream of deploring. I should gladly join them in lamenting the doom of Christianity, with this difference, however, between us, that they would wish back its imperfect realization in the form even in which it existed a century ago, while I do not believe that the loss of such a Christianity is to be deplored." (p. 190.)

As Senancour wrote in the first quarter of this century, we can readily perceive what sort of Christianity he had in mind. He is, however, of those who sincerely regret their loss of hold on the faith of their youth. It is to him—as the promised land to Moses—

a forbidden but beautiful country whither his soul may fly, but where his feet can never stand.

“Religion gives a goal, which, as it is never attained, is never unveiled; it subjects us, to set us at peace with ourselves. . . . It sets aside the idea of our insignificance; it removes the violent passions from life; it rids us of our desperate evils and our transient goods, in place of which it gives us a dream, the hope of whose realization—better perhaps than all real goods—endures at least till death. . . . But it rests on dogmas which some can not believe; some who, anxious for its effects, can not experience them, who regret its shelter but can never enjoy its security.” (p. 180.)

The plea that dogmas can be incomprehensible and yet credible, because there is mystery in nature, he meets with the following observation:

“There is indeed a difference between acknowledging that there are things incomprehensible to man, and affirming that an inconceivable hypothesis in respect to these things is true and infallible.” (p. 186.)

The old prudential argument of the unthinking adherents of religion—voiced by no less considerable a thinker than Pascal—he answers as it well deserves:

“*Believe because you run no risk by belief and run a great risk by disbelief*, is an argument conclusive in matters of conduct; it is absurd, if what is demanded is faith. When was belief ever dependent upon the bare exercise of will?” (p. 182.)

The question then obtrudes itself, whether or not a man is justified in preaching independence from established modes of belief:

“If men were never to be undeceived, nor ever

could be, the question remaining for decision would be whether the general good can give the right to utter falsehood, and whether or not it is a crime, or, at least, a wrong, to speak the truth, which contradicts it. But if this useful error—or rather this error which has been declared useful—can have a limited term only; if it be inevitable that some day credence will not be given on bare assertion, are we not compelled to conclude that all our moral edifice will be without means of support when this brilliant scaffolding has crumbled? By employing easier and speedier means of rendering the present secure, we expose the future to what may prove, perhaps, an irreparable overthrow. If, on the contrary, we had known how to discover in the human heart the eternal foundations of its morality; if we had known how to add what might possibly be wanting in our social organization and our city institutions; our labors, while, to be sure, more arduous and scientific, would have been as lasting as the world.” (p. 184.)

“The world begins to want certainties, and to perceive positive facts; morals are undergoing change, and faith is no more; we must hasten, then, to prove to mankind that quite independently of a future life, their hearts have need of righteousness; that even for the individual there is no happiness without reasonableness, and that virtues are laws of nature quite as indispensable to social man as the laws of physical want.” (p. 184.)

“I should never wish to rob of any notion whatsoever a head already empty enough to say, ‘Were there no hell, where would be the use of being righteous?’ It may happen, however, that what I write

might be read by such a man ; but it may also happen that I should diminish the number of those good souls who believe in duty only *because* they believe in hell. Perhaps I may succeed in making the notion of duty persist, when the fashion for relics and horned devils has quite passed.

“It is unavoidable that even the masses should come to scorn more or less, and certainly at no very remote period, one of these two notions which they have been most imprudently taught to receive only together. We have, then, to prove to their satisfaction that these notions can very well exist apart, that the consignment to oblivion in the case of one does not carry with it the subversion of the other.

“I believe this hour to be fast approaching. It will be more generally seen that we should not lay on what is transient the foundations of that moral refuge, banished from which we should be living in continuous secret warfare, in the midst of perfidies more odious than the acts of vengeance and the protracted hates of savage hordes.” (p. 370.)

From these rather copious extracts the reader can see how plain to Senancour seems the downfall of popular thaumaturgical Christianity. He does not believe merely that a divorce between religion and ethics is likely, but also that it is much to be desired for the greater permanent security and beneficence of the latter.

“Morality would greatly gain if it waived the support of a foredoomed fanaticism, in order to base its majesty on unimpeachable evidence. Do you want principles that speak to the heart? Summon, then, once more to your aid those principles that are in the heart of every well-organized man.” (p. 143.)

Where religion touches morality is, according to Senancour, chiefly in its doctrine of an after-existence of just rewards and punishments. Now, he holds that on one hand, this after-existence, in the literal sense, is problematic, and, therefore, only a restraint of a precarious sort, while on the other hand it actively vitiates virtue. Instead of immortality, he points out the true source of morality in man—a faculty akin to his sense of the proportionate in the realm of form, the harmonious in the domain of sound—an ethical instinct quite as real as man's æsthetic instinct, which requires no artificial stimulation from belief in heaven and hell.

Let us now retrace the thought of Obermann as summarized in the preceding paragraph, through a brief series of quotations:

“Is it not a notable fact that the terrors of an after-life have been a check to very few of those who were likely to be held back by nothing else? For the remainder of mankind, there are more natural, more direct, and, therefore, also more potent restraints. Since, once for all, man was endowed with a sense for order, since it forms a part of his nature, the need of it should have been made a conscious one in every individual. Thus there would have been left fewer villains than your dogmas leave, and we should have been spared all those they create.” (p. 187.)

The idea of immortality he regards as one easily accounted for, and of suspicious origin—at least not one to be trusted for much practical service among enlightened men.

“Very restless, and more or less unhappy, we are always looking forward to the following hour, the

next day, the years to come. We end by requiring an after-life as well. We have existed without living; some day, therefore, we shall live—a conclusion more agreeable than logical. If it is a consolation to the unhappy, we have one good reason the more for suspecting its validity.” (p. 183.)

Besides, continual reference to an after-life insensibly lowers our conception of morals:

“In our habit of connecting every magnanimous impulse, every honest and pure thought, exclusively with our hope of immortality, there always lurks the implication that all is vile which is not supernatural; that whatsoever fails of transporting a man in ecstasy to the abodes of bliss, must necessarily lower him to the level of the brute; that earthly virtues are miserable hypocrisy; and that a soul restricted to this present life in its hopes, has only infamous desires and impure thoughts.” (p. 188.)

Yet Senancour is not perverse enough to scorn the pathetic human desire for an eternal life.

“While the idea of immortality has every mark of a beautiful dream, that of annihilation can not be rigorously proved. The noble man must always desire that he may not perish altogether. Is not this enough to serve him as support? And besides, if to be righteous the hope of an after-life were needed, this shadowy possibility would suffice. But it is superfluous for him who leads a life according to reason. *There persists in the present a want of being righteous.*” (p. 189.)

A real belief in immortal rewards and punishments as a certainty would remove all choice of a reasonable sort; we should have virtue produced un-

der compulsion, and "coercion of every nature has harmful consequences and only temporary results; the time is fast coming when we shall have resort to persuasion." (p. 190.)

Should it be asked what is the practical use of virtue if we perish utterly at death, he will answer "self-respect, while we live."

"Man is perishable? It may be so, but let us perish fighting; and if annihilation be our doom, let us see to it that it be not our desert." (p. 412.)

Besides, the notion of the shortness of life would stimulate, so Obermann thinks, the moral life:

"To realize in silence that to-morrow every thing on earth may be over for us, means at the same time to appreciate with a firmer look what has been done and what must yet be done with the gifts of life." (p. 410.)

In any case, Obermann persists in reiterating in different words the question:

"Is not the tendency to order as essentially a part of our bent, of our instinct, as the tendency to self-preservation, or to the reproduction of the species?" (Quoted in George Sand's Preface.)

But there is another great harm which Obermann ascribes to the association of religion with morals. By supplying conduct with artificial stimulus and direction men are not taught the "wherefore," but simply the fact. Certain acts of an external sort are dogmatically branded, and certain words of hideous association come to be dreaded. The criminality is not the thing dreaded. The name and ill fame are alone of real importance.

"It is a fatal mistake to lay too much stress on

words and exterior acts; by this means, a familiarity gained, possibly in some legitimate way, with these ghosts of evil, might suffice to strip of all importance the evil itself." (p. 234.)

In consequence, since certain acts committed constitute depravity, while the actual guilt is never even measured, many come to prize themselves hypocritically as saints, because they have neither the faculties nor the opportunities for committing definite heinous acts.

"A wisdom contrary to natural order is a strange kind of wisdom. Every faculty, every energy is a perfection. It is a glorious thing to be stronger than one's passions; but it is sheer stupidity to pride one's self on the silence of the senses and of the heart; it is as though one should believe one's self more perfect from the very fact which makes one less capable of becoming perfect." (p. 279.)

But the most serious flaw of our moral teaching under the amiable patronage of religious hierarchies is a preference for what is difficult, as though difficulty was a mark of excellence. According to this the man whose nature happens to be inclined to the good should force himself to attain evil! Acts should not be praised for the mere sake of their impracticability and quixotism. If, now, morals were put on their natural basis, with their own normal criteria and motive energies, far better results would surely be achieved than at present.

"If the rules of morality preached to the people were true, consistent, and never strained; if the reason for each duty were shown, and a due proportion observed; if they had reference only to their actual

ends, we should have nothing left to do but to hold in check a handful of men whose ill-organized brains had no sense for righteousness." (p. 240.)

But now let us see just what Senancour believes to be the natural criterion of right and wrong :

"All is good, when intelligence directs it; evil, when unruled by reason. Make use of the body's goods, while ordering them with foresight. A pleasure enjoyed in harmony with universal nature, is [morally] better than an unnatural privation; and the most unmeritorious act of our lives is less evil than the strain imposed upon us by those aimless virtues which serve only to retard our growth in wisdom." (p. 116.)

"Every end of a natural desire is legitimate, and all the means it suggests are good, provided they infringe on the right of no one, and produce in ourselves no real disorder which counterbalances their usefulness. But duties have been too much stretched. In order to obtain enough, more than enough has been *demandé*. And this has been a mistake. Ask too much of men, and they rebel. If they are expected to exhibit chimerical virtues, they will; they declare that it costs them but little trouble. But for the very reason that this virtuousness does not proceed from their nature, they will indulge in secret conduct quite contrary to it; and because of the secrecy of this conduct, there will be no means of putting a check to its excesses." (p. 282.)

Against the common doctrine that in proportion to the unnaturalness and painfulness of an act is it meritorious, he speaks very distinctly :

"Permit, authorize pleasures, so that virtue may

exist; demonstrate the reasonableness of the laws, so that they may be revered. Invite to enjoyment, so that you be listened to when you enjoin suffering. Lift up the soul by the sense of natural delights; you will thus render it stronger and greater, to respect legitimate privations, and it will even revel in them when thoroughly convinced of their social utility." (p. 287.)

But from much that he has said, Obermann fears that he will be mistaken for a utilitarian, for a man who cynically scorns all efforts after the attainment of ideals:

"Can it be asserted that one ought to stop short of ideal beauty, of absolute happiness, and limit one's self to considerations of immediate use in the actual order of things? Because perfection is unattainable for every man, especially for mankind as a whole, shall we say that it is both unserviceable and foolishly futile to talk to them of such matters! Why, is not nature herself forever preparing the *more* that she may secure the *less*? Of a thousand seeds only one will spring. We should want to see what is the best conceivable, not merely in the hope of reaching it, but with a view to a closer approach than if we held out to ourselves, as the ultimate end of efforts, what they can in very deed attain." (p. 201.)

But there is a vast difference between striving after absolute perfection and a perverse preference for the difficult and painful in conduct! Still, the greatest fruit of the divorce of ethics and religious matters is to be found in the quality of our morality.

"When it lies in our power to do good, let us do

it for its own sake; and if our lot sets brilliant actions beyond reach, let us not neglect, at all events, what glory fails to reward. Let us leave uncertainties out of the question, and be good in our obscurity. There are plenty of men to seek fame for its own sake, and thereby to furnish what may, perhaps, be regarded as a necessary impetus to a great state; for our part, let us strive only to do what ought to deserve fame, and let us be indifferent to the whims of fate, that grants it often to success and denies it sometimes to heroism, and so rarely awards it to the pure in heart." (p. 243.)

Finally, before closing this series of extracts concerned with Senancour's doctrine of the divorce of of religion and ethics, let us see his vision of his true priest of morals—a vision destined to find its fulfillment in the career of Arnold:

"If there were righteous men, lovers of order by nature, whose first personal want was to bring men back to more unanimity, more conformity, and more joy; if, leaving to one side as doubtful whatever has never been proved, they impressed on men's minds the principles of righteousness and universal love which no one could confute; if they ventured to speak of those unerring paths of bliss; if carried away by the truth they felt, they saw, which the listener, too, could not but perceive, they were to consecrate their lives to proclaiming it in different ways, and to create conviction by repetition. . . ." (p. 185.)

Are we wrong in crying, "Matthew Arnold?"

It is time now to turn our attention to the second

great subject of Obermann—the vanity of individual life and the consolation to be drawn from nature.

“Seen from above, what is the worth of things from which our last breath will separate us?” (p. 411.)

“For us, who are individuals, those laws for the whole, that care for the species, this contempt of the individual, this march of creation, are very hard to bear. I admire the providence which labors on a vast scale; but see how man is pitched among the rubbish! What folly to fancy we are something! Gods in our thought, insects as to happiness, we are like the Jupiter whose temple is in Bedlam: his bowl of soup brought into his cell, he mistakes for a censer, and he sits enthroned upon Olympus till the vilest of jailors recalls him to the world of fact by a blow, to kiss the hand that struck, and moisten his moldy bread with tears.” (p. 194.)

But this searing sadness does not annihilate for him the moral man:

“Granted that all is foreordained, it is also foreordained that I should behave as though there were no predestination.” (p. 200.)

Besides, our insignificance is also a source of self-esteem:

“A transitory incident: I was—I shall cease to be! It is with a sense of awe that I discover that my thoughts are vaster than my being.” (p. 86.)

“To give over all the faculties of life to mere pleasure is to give one’s self up to eternal death” (p. 411), for joys are disappointing, and “in human sufferings, at all events, we get a taste of that infinity, with which we would gladly endow our being before

it be diffused by a puff of time." (p. 83.) Furthermore, "to suffer and to be unhappy, are not one and the same thing," and so he cries, "I do not want to enjoy; I want to hope. I should wish to know. I feel the need of limitless illusions, that withdraw to deceive me again. Of what interest to me is what has an end?" (p. 85.) And again, in a moment of soul-dominion, he gives us this prayer: "Sad and vain conception of a better world! Inexpressible overflow of love? Sorrow, rather, art thou for the time that runs on uselessly! O passion for the world's weal, sustain, consume my life! What were it without thy sinister beauty? It is in thee that life is felt, it is through thee that it shall perish." (p. 77.)

Thinking of those who regard happiness as so readily attainable, "What a soul," he cries, indignantly, "have those people then been given, who know of no greater misery than to suffer hunger?" (p. 76.)

The one great torture of life is the inadequacy of its opportunities for the full play of the soul's powers:

"I know of nothing which so fills life with weariness as this perpetual drawl of things. It keeps us ever in a state of expectancy, until our life is over before we have reached the point where we intended to begin it." (p. 68.)

Again and again we have the same complaint.

"Man, whose greatest unhappiness would be incapacity for suffering; whom obstacles incite, and pleasures overwhelm; who grows in love with repose, only when he has forfeited it; who, borne on ceaselessly from illusion to illusion, does not and can not

possess any thing else but illusions, and never does more than dream of living." (p. 330.)

Since things are thus, he becomes perplexed. What does he wish? To be undeceived? "I want no more desires—they do not delude me. I do not want them extinguished—that absolute vacancy would be more terrible still."

And yet, again, Obermann draws a strange, sadly-sweet honey of self-esteem out of this bitter perplexity and disappointment:

"We do suffer because we are not what we have it in us to become; but were we in the midst of that world of opportunities by which we wish we were surrounded, we should not then have any more this excess of appetites, this superabundance of powers; we should no longer experience the delight of being superior to our destiny, greater and more creative than our environment requires." (p. 79.)

Still he cries: "My heart craves all, wants all, contains all! What shall I substitute for that infinite which my soul demands?" (p. 186.)

And how does he answer this question? Shall it be learning? Hear how he speaks of those eternal hungerers after recondite erudition:

"I can see those wavering spirits acquire information in solitude or content, while the oblivion of eternity is about to roll over their sapient spell-bound brains its wave of inevitable death, and, in one moment of nature's sway, annul their being and their thoughts, as well as their whole age." (p. 69.)

It is to the illusive consolations of nature that he turns, to her eternal allegories, sympathies, witcheries of beauty and delight. Let us here remember Arnold's

usual manner of closing a poem of spiritual struggle, and also keep in mind what he has said of the future of poetry in the beautiful essay prefixed to Ward's great representative anthology.

"Can you understand the pleasure I feel when my foot sinks in soft burning sands, when I push on with difficulty, and find no water, no cool, no shade? Before me unplowed spaces without a sound; ruinous rocks, stripped bare and shattered; the forces of nature overcome by the power of time! Is it not as though I were at peace, when I see about me, under a burning sky, other barriers and abuses than those of my own heart?" (p. 74.)

We shall now translate three extracts in which he will show us how nature satisfied his thirst for the unreachable. Of course, it is only the spirit immanent in these that we would have the reader compare with that of Matthew Arnold's poems. It is not an indebtedness in particular instances of Arnold to Senancour that we hope to establish; it is to a kinship that we would call attention—a kinship of spirit. Here, first, we have Obermann in rural surroundings:

"Since they were meant to yield a choicer wine, we decided at supper that these grapes should be gathered with our own hands only, selecting first the ripest, leaving a few days more to those that should yet need to mature. On the morrow, as soon as the mists had somewhat thinned, I put my basket on a barrow, and was the first to reach the end of the inclosure and begin the vintage. I was engaged in it almost single handed, nor did I try to find more expeditious means. I enjoyed the very slowness, and was sorry to see any one else at work. The vintage

lasted some twelve days. My barrow came and went along neglected paths rank with wet grass; I would purposely select the roughest and steepest, and so the days ran on insensibly, in the midst of mist and fruit and autumn sun. At dusk we poured our tea in milk yet warm, laughed at men who hunt for pleasures abroad, walked through the old hedged arbors, and went to rest content. I have seen the pomps of life, and in my heart there still burns the germ of vaster passions. I feel there also the sense for the great want of social life, the delight in philosophic order. Marcus Aurelius I have read, but he caused me no surprise. I can imagine all strained virtues, even the extreme heroism of a monastic life. All *that* can quicken my soul, but does not fill it. This barrow I load with grapes and gently push in front of me sustains it better. It seems to be quietly wheeling my hours along; I feel as though these slow and useful movements, this measured pace, were suited to the usual ebb and flow of life." (p. 66.)

Once more let us listen to Obermann, now in the city:

"It was dark and somewhat chill. I was in low spirits, and walked because I could do nothing better. I passed along a wall just high enough to lean on, near some flowers planted there. One daffodil in blossom! The most potent expression of yearning, the first perfume of the year! I felt in myself all the bliss destined for mankind. The indescribable harmony of all beings, the phantom of the ideal world entirely possessed me; never did I experience any thing so great, so sudden. How can I discover what form, what analogy, what hidden tie made me see in that

flower a beauty without all limits; the expression, the grace, the attitude of a woman, happy and artless, in the full loveliness and splendor of her springtide of love? Never, do what I may, shall I be able to understand that power—that intensity nothing can convey; that form nothing can embody; that consciousness we feel of a better world, which yet seems left by nature uncreated; that gleam of heaven we think we seize, which inspires with passion, transports us, yet is only an indiscernible, wandering, homeless ghost, whose haunt is the abyss of gloom. But this shadowy dream, this image beautifully vague, endowed with all the potency of the unknown, grown needful to us in our miseries, and natural to our oppressed hearts—where is the man who having caught but a glimpse of it, could ever forget it again? When the resistance, the opposition of a dead, brutal, hideous power trammels us, surrounds us, presses hard upon us, holds us down in doubt, disgust, and puerile details, stupid and cruel absurdities; when sure of nothing, possessed of nothing, all passes before our eyes like the eccentric creatures of some odious, farcical nightmare; who will keep down in our hearts the want of another order of things, of another nature?" (p. 110.)

Let us close with a note of peace:

"The nightingale from time to time threw into that expectant silence her solitary notes, single and reiterated; that song of blissful nights, the sublime utterance of a primitive melody; the unspeakable upward leap of love and agony; voluptuous as the need that consumes my life; simple, full of mystery, limitless as the heart that loves." (p. 273.)

III. AGNOSTIC POETS OF OUR DAY.

1. ENGLAND'S AGNOSTIC POETS.

I believe there is no charge an educated person of our days more bitterly resents than that of superstition or credulity. Who of us, at all events, must not confess to a little uneasiness should he chance to find himself believing very much that so many extremely clever persons declare they have quite outgrown?

The old arguments for our cherished tenets are being of course re-edited and reprinted with encouraging energy. Nor is there wanting among the younger divines something that resembles a spirit of enterprise. The faces of all are not turned to the past. But the question that concerns us most is not how many volumes of apologetic literature, old and new, are annually issued, and how many edified readers they can boast; it is whether or not the many stout intellects in the van-guard of scientific progress, that are well disposed, anxious to uplift and spiritualize the race, but devoid of such definite religious convictions as have hitherto always been requisite for moving the masses to any great extent—whether or not this relatively small but actually large and very precious section of civilized humanity is being converted to what we deem the truth at any rate which keeps pace with their natural increase?

“Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry

the idea is every thing; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry."*

We may or may not assent to this criticism. We may or may not approve of this contrast between religion and poetry. We may regard it as merely a rhetorical opposition. We may indeed go on and state that emotion can not well be attached to any idea without just this very materialization in supposed facts; that even poetry always takes facts from history or makes them out of facts taken; and that while we are enjoying the poetry, our emotions are successfully attached to the idea just in proportion to our acceptance of these probably fictitious objects and events as actual. The more substantial we take the symbol to be, the more real will that which it symbolizes appear. But, whatever our opinion as to the fitness of poetry for replacing religion and philosophy—when in all experience it has been poetry which has mothered them, they replacing her as more definite and certain, more fit to rule the unaesthetic many—we must agree with Mr. Arnold's negative statement that "there is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve."

And the first paragraphs of the late Thomas Hill Green's Introduction to his *Prolegomena to Ethics* are calculated to raise the question: Why is *that* "welcomed by reflecting men as expressing deep con-

* Matthew Arnold's Essay on Poetry.

victions of their own" when "presented in the rapt unreasoned form of poetic utterance," which theologically or philosophically stated, they are disposed to repudiate before it has been granted so much as a hearing? Surely men have not come to distrust the Reason? Surely it is not because the theologian and philosopher insist on systemizing an array of facts (at which the poet only casts a random glance), and strive to make their resulting statements cohere with the general body of our knowledge? Is it not because the poet arrogates to himself no right to speak for any except such as sympathize with him; because he does not attempt to give the appearance of completeness to a fragment, or the name of dogma or inevitable conclusion to a guess; because, in Mr. Green's words, the poet does not profess to do more than represent a mood of his own soul, leaving us to attribute to the mood itself what value we feel it rightly claims?

It is not, then, that acute close reasoning conscientiously conducted arouses suspicion, but that we are not satisfied with the premises whereto the logical chain is attached, and while we are disposed to believe the substance of the conclusion, we are not able to accept it as a cogently proved proposition.

Transcendental subjects, which by the very use of symbolism in our deliverances about them we clearly confess to be altogether outside the domain of accurate knowledge and direct statement, have been foolhardily invaded by lovers of definite opinions. A word applicable purely by way of metaphor, tentatively and for its power of suggestion singled out by some master-writer on spiritual themes, is taken to be

descriptive—exactly, definitely, exhaustively expressive—in touch with its object at every point of its manifold meaning. Tangential contact, so to speak, which the prophet and poet asserted, is by the theologian treated as though it were the coincidence of two circles with the same center and a radius of equal length! Thus resemblance passes for identity. Logic is then called in to perform a pitiable duty. With juggler's ease one can now argue back from the partially known fact to the familiar symbol, and forth from it again to unexplored regions of fact, which sort of argumentation is described as a series of successful voyages of discovery. Fly-specks on my map of Africa are great cities in the wilderness, which I can magnanimously christen after my friends. What an honor to stand sponsor for some metropolis which no explorer has yet been able to discover! So the Arians of old, for instance, argued that there was a time when the Eternal Son was not, because forsooth, a *human* father must pre-exist all offspring!

Such childish mistaking of symbolic suggestion for complete definition has vitiated so much theology, not to say philosophy and science, that a belligerent iconoclastic agnosticism has good work to do in the cause of truth. Of all theologians, those of Christendom are surely most to blame for such pretended omniscience, whose religious books extol "faith" so much, and give it its proper dignity as man's only guide in regions which present sight is unable to penetrate.*

The Christ spake to Nicodemus what he *knew*;

* 2 Co. v., 7; Ro. viii., 24; 1 Co. xiii., 12.

and a "Verily, verily,"* claimed for him often enough a first-hand intuitive acquaintance with the matters of which he treated; the disciples, in the main, however, were forced to content themselves with speaking what they *believed* on the strength of their master's assertion that he knew. Coupled with "truth," we do not find the word "logic," but the word "spirit" or "life." Religious truth in fact, according to the New Testament, denotes something of which life, not argument, is the test. The creed is verifiable in *deed*. The tree is to be judged not from its consistent symmetry, but from its fruit.

By religious beliefs we mean, then, or ought to mean, convictions concerning "man," his life, and the universe, which are not speculative and disinterested, but of such a nature as to modify conduct and affect our capacity for happiness. St. Paul goes so far as to contrast "faith" and "sight;" to view them as incompatible; he values "sight" beyond "faith" where sight is possible; but faith is exercised in matters so much nobler than such as admit of present "sight," that to man his little guess is often worth to him far more than his most varied assortment of slowly accumulated certainties. When I say, "I believe God is good," I mean that I stake my life on the assumption, although without doubt it is altogether beyond the range of what we mean by abstract *demonstration*. When I have lived my life out consistently with this proposition, and have cause to be satisfied with the results, I can then declare that I have proved it *true* for *me*. When all men have done

* St. J. iii., 11-13.

the same, it can be said to be proved for mankind. Till then it must be not a matter of experimental knowledge, nor assuredly of rational certainty, but of "faith."

We have been told that the business of science is simply to classify facts after repeated experiments. That no facts should ever be assumed to be facts, no matter how much we are tempted to do so, in order to render our classification neater and more symmetrical. We have heard so much of this that we have come to assume it as a good piece of practicable doctrine. We fancy that the physical scientists have abided by this golden rule; that they never do any thing so pernicious and vicious as to speculate, imagine, believe. Now, a moment's sober reflection shows us that men are so constituted as never to rest content till they have a theory that marshals in one army the multitude of observed facts. Our experiences must be grouped in an intelligible order. Where none is discernible, is it not legitimate to avoid intellectual confusion by the assumption of some unobserved fact which, were it a fact, would satisfy our demand for reasonableness in the world? In view of our limited knowledge, is such an assumption not justifiable when our knowledge has been made to reach its utmost limit? And even before, is not the pressure exercised by the immediate necessity of *living now* forcing us to adopt provisional explanations, though we are morally certain they will sooner or later have to be set aside?

And so it is that "reflecting men" do "welcome" the "'breath and finer spirit of knowledge' offered to

us by poetry,"* and if they refuse to listen to the theologian and philosopher, it is not because they object to the application of methods of close reasoning, of literary and historic verification, to the "beliefs" or "guesses" on which we stake our lives sooner or later, but because they shrewdly suspect that these methods have been grossly misapplied; or because they insist on most fanatically capitulating to the common foe of man's felicity without condition, when they could so easily have dictated the terms of their surrender. For, to treat as purely illusory the presumptions required for the explanation of man's higher life, and yet to treat as practical certainties those which are an interpretation (at bottom always subtly anthropomorphic) of external phenomena, appears unpardonable inconsistency. Why should "the truth which we feel" † be any less reliable (provided we *do* feel it always under given conditions) than the truth we profess to think?

We can not afford in science to let willful agnosticism obstruct the path to further knowledge. Working hypotheses blaze a way for us into the woods, which many travelers will ultimately tramp into a mud road, called a theory, and civilization in due time macadamize and dignify with the name of "law." Even then it may some time be abandoned by the traffic of thought. Because we *do* not know that is no proof we can not. Because some particular "guess" does not harmonize with other "guesses," that is no reason it should not some day harmonize with

* Matthew Arnold's Essay on Poetry.

† Green's Prolegomena, pp. 2-3.

these guesses modified, or with guesses which will supersede them.

The geologist works on. The chemist does not lose heart. The archeologist and historian are full of courage. Why then should the student of religious phenomena despair? Some day the lines may meet. At all events it is too soon for the defenders of religious truths to retreat, though, doubtless, they will have to abandon all their stately stone fortresses, and erect earth-works better fitted to resist the modern artillery of doubt.

The "application of ideas to life" is the province of poetry we are told. The application of ideas to man's higher life is that of religion. Their work is the same only the province of poetry is wider. But the theologian professes to reduce to order, to investigate the implications of those various ideas, and discover the further assumptions requisite to organize them. Because the work can not be done once for all with any degree of certainty, shall he lay aside his tools, stretch himself full length on the ground, face downward, and give up the ghost? Does he avail himself of past literature? Shall he stop doing so because mechanical critics of that literature fly at each other's throats about questions that can not affect the value of that literature *as* literature, as a reliable product of the sane human spirit, witnessing to its normal needs, to its primary convictions, to its difficulties in applying them, to its rare but most precious successes?

Let us consider briefly our present life. So far as we know we did not ask to live. True, but here we are. What have we so far found life to be? Is it

wholly satisfactory? What do the great majority of men and women think of it? Have they no complaints to make? I am not allowing, of course, for the compensations of any life or lives beyond this present one, nor am I asking you to imagine what life would be under non-actual conditions. Beginning with childhood and all its aches, stretching on to death through a helpless, maybe imbecile, old age, with privations, disappointments, bereavements, occasional satisfactions and usual discontents or satiations and disgusts, between beginning and end—is this present life such as we should choose to live for its own sake?

It is a question which we shrink from meeting. We always try to evade it. We strike out to right or left along the first convenient by-way that promises to hide us from it in a forest tangle of metaphysical speculations, or in high meadow grasses of poetry where butterfly hopes flutter from fancy-flower to fancy-flower, quite oblivious of their previous ugly caterpillar stage as memories! And yet in serious hours we find no happy by-ways, and must bravely face the question. Now the consentient judgment of the most distinguished minds of the past is well known. Either they declare that this life is on the whole for the great majority of men quite unsatisfactory, or they say it is satisfactory in view of certain transcendental compensations. Unsatisfactory in itself now, it is not so with reference to what will result of it—another imagined life or lives. Unsatisfactory for me now as an individual, or for us as a society, it is not so with reference to what it will be to other individuals in a better society.

And here, of course, we have evaded the plain question. Transcendental optimists by the energy with which they construct and then exhibit their beautiful cities of sunrise-clouds, testify as strongly, if not more strongly, than do the avowed pessimists to the unsatisfactoriness of life, in and of itself, for all but some fortunate few. The witness of Job and Solomon, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, is not stronger than that of St. John and St. Paul; that of Plato, Zeno, Spinoza, and Hegel, not less loud than that of Schopenhauer. Browning's witness is, if any thing, more emphatic than Ibsen's, Goethe's than Heine's. Notwithstanding, the great masses live on, and it is said that they do so from sheer inertia. They have begun and can not stop. At all events, they are afraid to stop. Perhaps stopping, for aught they know, is worse than going on. So Hamlet feared. The mere brute instinct of self-preservation propels them. The childish hope that to-morrow may perhaps be better than to-day encourages them.

Of course, there are not wanting those who object to the witness of the past. They assert that we only get the testimony of men of genius or of extraordinary talent. That the vast multitude of contented common-sense folk who have been on this earth before us, have *lived* and rejoiced in having *made* history, not written it, and can not, therefore, be consulted. Confessedly, men of genius or great talent are exceptional—men possibly misdeveloped or diseased. Furthermore, they bid us observe that we ourselves incline to a pessimistic view most frequently when we are conscious of feebleness, failure, extreme

poverty, disease, and that in proportion to our general health, strength, wealth, and success does a more cheerful view preponderate. All pessimism, therefore, we may set down as *morbid*. The judgment of the man at his best (as we say) is alone trustworthy.

However, in spite of this plausible plea, even if it should be urged by some sensational charlatan beyond seas, who has been translated—not like Enoch because God took him, but because it paid booksellers in hard cash—we may have to accept the witness of men of genius and extraordinary talent. And for these reasons:

First, be it observed, the contented masses are made up of just those people who most unquestionably accept, when in need of comfort or encouragement, drippings from butts* of stored up Transcendentalism. It is they who are always pleased to view this life in the light of happy fictions. So their witness is not to life in and of itself. They probably have not enough intellectual discipline to segregate facts from fancies, and so to report on the mere facts.

Second, when we are most healthy, strong, prosperous, and successful, we are most inclined to let the animal in us prevail. When aware of feebleness, failure, poverty, disease, the higher faculties, those most characteristically human, as a rule, are brought into requisition. Our optimism of the healthy, muscular, prosperous, and successful sort, has usually very little to do with any thing else than bodily functions, bodily satisfactions, or personal vanity. Pessimism, on the

* Cf. Browning's Epilogue to Pacchiarotto.

contrary, is loudest of lung when adverse fortunes force a man to try the things of the soul, weigh them, and find them in and for this life decidedly wanting:

“In man there's failure only since he left
The lower and unconscious forms of life;
Most progress is most failure.”*

Now, what escape is there from the conclusion that life is for the average man (if he only knew it!) not worth living? Why, of course, every religion furnishes an escape, every transcendental philosophy attempts to do so. But Mr. Arnold, and many also who think quite differently from him, will not be satisfied with any escape furnished by a *religion*, or a philosophy, which are by them believed to start with illegitimate assumptions. And if it be believed that they do so start, are they not nobly right? for how could any man worthy the name allow himself to avoid thus ignominiously the single battle he must fight victoriously against pessimism, or perish? And it is quite certain that “there is not a creed that is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve.” Agnostics must come to some conclusion quite as much as other men. Perpetual serene suspense of soul is not possible, any more than perpetual hanging by the neck without suffocation. And the men from the agnostic ranks who have bravely challenged the problem and given us a record of their life and death struggle in noble verse are Arthur Hugh Clough, Matthew Ar-

* Browning's Cleon.

nold, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Algernon Charles Swinburne.

2. ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

Harmony of soul must be obtained. Heart and head must agree upon terms of peace. But how? How shall you envisage the feeling which survives the thought? Is the feeling only an afterglow, lasting but a little longer, diffused over half heaven and earth's highest peaks? If the sun of intellectual conviction has indeed set, can we expect any permanence for this creedless worship, this hunger for the infinite? Or has the sun been merely eclipsed by moon and clouds simultaneously, so that this dim twilight in which we walk will be heightened to daylight again by and by? Or is it such light as that in northern climes which never forsakes the sky, though it leaves the earth in gloom, waiting and watching between day and day?

Upon the conception of the dignity of religious feeling depends its treatment. Can it and ought it to be extirpated? Can it and ought it to be so increased by artificial stimuli that it may become quasi-independent of opinions and convictions? The former is Mr. Swinburne's view (if the writer of this paper understands him), the latter Rossetti's. If neither of these methods be adopted, what middle ground can be taken?

There is Arthur Hugh Clough's* attempt to win "peace out of strife." Loyalty to truth is to him a maxim, a necessity:

"And yet, when all is thought and said,

* References are to Macmillan's 1 vol. edition.

The heart still overrules the head;
 Still what we hope we must believe
 And what is given us receive." *

Of course the sentiment attaching to ancestral creeds is recognized, but it can not and must not sway us.

"The souls of now two thousand years
 Have laid up here their toils and fears,
 And all the earnings of our pain,
 Ah! yet consider it again!

Alas! the great world goes its way,
 And takes the truth from each new day.
 They do not quit, nor can retain,
 Far less consider it again." †

The moral power which those creeds fostered, however, must by all means be preserved. If the garden is about to wither in a "winter of discontent," let us speedily gather in the flowers and distill from them an essence of piety, self-oblation, and patience. We have been freed from the shackles of history. Duty must be understood in a better way, in harmony with a religious feeling which has outlived conviction. Duty, then, and piety, are maids no longer; nor wives either, for that matter. Decalogue ‡ and Convention, || successive husbands of Duty, are both dead. Intellectual conviction has breathed his last, and religious feeling, or Piety, is alone. Two widows in weeds of mourning, sworn not to remarry, but to live on memories of old home happiness, Duty and Piety come, as it were, to espouse one another; at least such seems to be Clough's hope.

* "Through a glass darkly," p. 51.

† "Ah, yet, consider it again," p. 52.

‡ The latest Decalogue, p. 134.

|| Duty, p. 131.

“O God! O God! the great floods of the sou
Flow over me! I come into deep waters
Where no ground is.”*

After a while, however, the agony sobers down.
A hope that ere we choke we shall “feel our feet upon
the ground”† in a different sense than that meant by
the Spirit of this world, comes to us, bidding us
“wait:”—

“And thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, refrain thyself, and wait!‡

Nor shall our waiting be idle expectancy:—

“If live we positively must
God’s name be blest for noble deeds.”||

Are the stained glass windows in the soul’s ora-
tory broken? Shall we wail over the loss of our
good apostolic figures in their blue or scarlet mantles?

“Are, say you, Matthew, Mark, and Luke and Holy John
Lost? Is it, lost, to be recovered never?

However,

The place of worship the meantime with light

Is, if less richly, more sincerely bright

And in blue skies the orb is manifest.¶

Is the physical resurrection of Jesus incredible?
At all events, his spiritual influence is a fact:—

“Though dead, not dead;
Not gone, though fled;
Not lost, though vanished.
In the Great Gospel and true creed
He is yet risen indeed;
Christ is yet risen.”¶

To be sure, such an attitude isolates a man. Be-
lievers and disbelievers alike scorn or pity him. Old

* Dipsychus, sc. vi, p. 115.

† Id., sc. viii, p. 124.

‡ In a London Square, p. 143.

|| Dipsychus, sc. iii, p. 98.

¶ Epi-Strauss-ium, p. 53.

¶ Easter Day, p. 63.

friendships are strained. Yet he blames none. In three poems he vindicates himself and his friends. Who can help divergence in convictions? And if divergence in convictions involves the cooling of affection, how can that be prevented? But both his "Sic Itur" and "Qua Cursum Ventus" end with hope:—

"Whether he then shall cross to thee,
Or thou go thither, or it be
Some midway point ye yet shall see
Each other, yet again shall meet.
Ah, joy! when with the closing street
Forgivingly at last ye greet." *

What stern consciousness of duty, what strong yearning for mutual sympathy, what invincible affection, personal vanity never marring his esteem for those from whom his quest of truth parts him! But there is a sadder "Parting"—"Qui Laborat, Orat" and "*ἔμνος ἀέμνος*" are records of it. Direct communion with the Friend of Friends seems denied him:

"O, not unowned, Thou shalt unnamed forgive,
In worldly walks the prayerless heart prepare,
And if in work its life it seemed to live,
Shalt make that work *be* prayer."

Yet what a grand self-renunciation in lines like these:

"But, as Thou willest, give or even forbear,
The beatific, supersensual sight,
So, with thy blessing blest, that humbler prayer
Approach Thee morn and night." †

What a girding of the spirit for a blind battle, in the thought that the friends, maybe those we have parted from, are now all but conquerors! Why al-

* Sic Itur, p. 29.

† "Qui laborat, orat," p. 47.

ways scrutinize the East, and despair at the slowness of the dawn? Even windows looking westward admit light!*

The message of Clough at length is summed up in two poems, "The Questioning Spirit" and "Hope Evermore and Believe."

Yes, "Doubt" has its work to do. Not to lead, maybe, to theoretic certainty, but to that practical certainty which can dispense with theory. Long ago had he cried:

"Away, haunt thou not me
Thou vain philosophy! . . .
Why labor at the dull mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing,
And the strong current flowing,
Right onward to the eternal shore?" †

The Questioning Spirit gets no answer from Clough save: "I know not, I will do my duty," and the Spirit answers him:

"Truly! thou know 'st not, and thou need'st not know;
Hope only, hope thou, and believe away;
I also know not, and I need not know,
Only with questionings pass I to and fro,
Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly
Inbreeding doubt and skeptic melancholy;
Till that, their dreams deserting, they with me
Come all to this true ignorance and thee." ‡

After all is not theory for practice? If a happy instinct, or if the genius of work itself, make possible a practice more and more perfect without any theory of the intellect, provided we retain the theory of the heart,—which is faith in the absolute value of prac-

*Cf. "Say not the struggle naught availeth," p. 326.

† "In a Lecture-Room," p. 7. ‡ The Questioning Spirit, p. 136.

tice, and hope of its beautiful issues,—then wherefore be any longer anxious? Of course, pursue truth. Believe it worth pursuing because you hope to hold it against your beating heart some day. But, in the meanwhile, before you have come near enough to truth to sense it with certainty, do not pretend to an intimate acquaintance with form, features, and expression. You have seen Truth as a romantic lover, his fair lady in a dream only. Let your dream encourage you, but prepare for her actual splendors by letting the dream fade, if fade it must!

“Go from the East to the West, as the sun and the stars direct thee,

Go with the girdle of man, go and encompass the earth.

Not for the gain of the gold; for the getting, the hoarding, the having,

But for the joy of the deed; but for the duty to do.

Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition and action,

With the great girdle of God, go and encompass the earth.”*

Two things, however, must be guarded against. An absurd conceit that any thing we do has absolute worth to others and to God; an absurd self-contempt, mere transmuted vanity, which would refrain from action.

“Go, when the instinct is stilled, and when the deed is accomplished,

What thou hast done and shalt do, shall be declared to thee then.

Go with the sun and the stars, and yet evermore in thy spirit

Say to thyself: It is good: yet is there better than it.

This that I see is not all, and this that I do is but little;

Nevertheless it is good, though there is better than it.”*

* “Hope Evermore and Believe,” p. 138.

To see the worth of doubt that destroys dogmatic knowledge crying to it in tones of authority :

“ The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or re-assume, or hold succeeding thee ;” *

giving scope to faith, and yet not allowing it to call itself “ knowledge,” applying to faith boldly the same doom ; not only to see the worth of doubt, but to feel it, and therefore to foster doubt, while also fostering faith ; requires indeed a courageous soul. He is the man Bishop Blougram would fain have made himself out to be.

“ What matter though I doubt at every pore,
Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers’ ends,
Doubts in the trivial work of every day,
Doubts at the very bases of my soul
In the grand moments when she probes herself—
If finally I have a *life* to show
The thing I did. . . .

You call for faith
I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.
The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say
If faith o’ercomes doubt. How I know it does ?
By *life* and man’s *free will*.

All’s doubt in me ; where’s break of faith in this ?
It is the idea, the *feeling and the love*,
God means mankind should strive for and show forth
Whatever be the process to that end,—
And not historic knowledge, logic sound,
And metaphysical acumen.” †

That this abjuration of speculative thought, this determination to work in the dark, can not bring peace of soul save at the cost of total self-denial, is

* Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound, Act III.

† Bishop Blougram’s Apology, pp. 105–6. Vol. 4, Riverside Edition of Robert Browning’s Poems.

perhaps the very consciousness which compels Clough more and more to an impartial, great-hearted inclusiveness; he sees things less and less from the point of view of self, insists less and less on his own salvation; but, for all this magnanimous, difficult devotion to a God who will not reveal himself, he found peace only in death.

Let me quote two stanzas that well define the office of doubt. A bird close hidden in dense foliage sings :

“ But when the air’s -atremble
 With singings that assemble
 All shapeless ecstasies and visions vain,
 The sweep of our own wings
 In seeking him that sings
 Makes angels of us in doubt’s passing pain.

And so thou art a type
 Of God, whose soul is ripe
 For all men, and to find the singer, we
 Have risen from the mire,
 Are what we are, and higher
 Must wander on, until we cease to be !” *

Surely, however, with Clough, we

“ Must still believe, for still we hope
 That in a world of larger scope
 What here is faithfully begun
 Will be completed, not undone ;” †

and that at length will “ the eyes in recognition start,” beholding God as he is.

* The Unseen Singer, St. 4, p. 82, Lyrics, Idylls and Fragments, by J. H. Armstrong. The Publishers’ Printing Co., 120 E. 14th St., N. Y.

† “Through a glass darkly,” p. 51.

3. ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

But if Clough, compelling doubt to what seems its legitimate function, and while preventing any usurpation of improper authority by "faith," also compelling doubt not to maim or slay "faith," lives in fierce unrest; Mr. Swinburne is certainly no more fortunate. To be sure, he resolutely dons jeweled armor of verse, and, wielding with both hands a long sword of flaring rhetoric, fights faith with much clatter if little slaughter; for, of course, "faith" will not come close enough to this very terrible fellow, even for distant inspection. His yells and execrations have a most courageous ring. But do you call it victory to be always in need of bell-book and candle to pronounce some voluble curse on an enemy one always fancies dead, only to encounter alive again after a little while, for all our killing anathemas?

Bishop Blougram has once for all expressed in strong language the true nature of the problem confronting Mr. Swinburne:

"Our dogmas then
(With both of us, though in unlike degree,
Missing full credence)—overboard with them! . . .
And now what are we? unbelievers both,
Calm and complete, determinately fixed
To-day, to-morrow and forever, pray?
You'll guarantee me that? Not so, I think!
In no wise! All we've gained is, that belief,
As unbelief before, shakes us by fits,
Confounds us like its predecessor. Where's
The gain? How can we guard our unbelief,
Make it bear fruit to us?—*the problem here.*
Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,

A chorus ending from Euripides,—
 And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
 As old and new at once as nature's self,
 To rap and knock and enter in our soul,
 Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring,
 Around the ancient idol, on his base again,—
 The grand Perhaps! . . .
 All we have gained then by our unbelief
 Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,
 For one of faith diversified by doubt:
 We called the chess-board white,—we call it black."

Now the problem "how to guard our unbelief," so far as we can judge from Mr. Swinburne's poems, he addressed himself to solve with "vigor and rigor." Eschew all regions associated hitherto with outgrown superstitions. Enslave the path of excesses to the abode of a mediæval Venus-witch. Indulge in dotings, like Chastelard's, on some vicious vanity. If satiation or disenchantment should again endanger us, take imaginative refuge in times whose religion was other than ours, where no hints of our discarded superstitions in their wonted and therefore dangerous form may lurk. In the garden of Proserpine, with Atalanta in Calydon, with Erechtheus of ancient Athens! It may be, however, that in the end we shall behold Fate bearing unpleasant, if remote, resemblance to Providence. For, notwithstanding all the fury of Mr. Swinburne's genius and all his scholarship, in spite of his excursion with Baudelaire into unhallowed regions, and his persistent use of colored glasses that make all familiar objects safely new and strange, he is not able to escape from his fierce unrest without formulating a definite creed. And this he does at considerable length in more than one passage.

Life offers a reasonable amount of gratification in

return for a definite amount of exertion and endurance. If you train yourself to expect no more than you are likely to get, you will be content. Extravagant ambitions, unreasonable heart-claims, unsatisfiable spiritual aspirations, must be deliberately extirpated. One can systematically induce the atrophy little by little of all those faculties (or rather supposed faculties) for which this present life affords no scope. Then the normal exercise of the rest will constitute the *summum bonum*. Make your mental and sentimental vision exactly coincide with ocular perception. Get rid of ghosts. Stop worrying about shadows, and take a good hold of the bone with your teeth!

“*His* soul is even with the sun
 Whose spirit and whose eyes are one ; *
 Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
 And heavy heat of day by night.
Him can no God cast down, whom none
 Can lift in hope beyond the height
 Of fate and nature, and things done
 By the calm rule of might and right
 That bids men be and bear and do
 And die beneath blind skies or blue.†

In other terms, extinguish yearnings, delicate dreams, sensitive affections, ecstatic wants, which inhere neither in the stomach, nor the liver, nor the lungs. Be an intelligent, sensible, reasonably genial, self-indulgent animal, and if you are that *and nothing else* you will find life worth living. He who cuts his coat to his cloth may go scantily clad, but does not get

* Cf. Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
 He is a slave—the meanest we can meet!

—(Wordsworth, Personal Talk, Sonnet 2.)

In the Appendix will be found a sketch of Wordsworth's practical philosophy for comparison with Swinburne and Arnold.

† Prelude to Songs before Sunrise, St. 5.

into his tailor's debt! And scant clothing is not so dreadful when once one is well rid of the crass superstition of fine clothes!

No doubt Mr. Swinburne would not wish to put the case so coarsely. Like the true poet that he is, he can not wholly "quench the spirit." He finds his own solace in hysterical advocacies of social reform, in sincere admirations that amount to frenzies for Mazzini and Victor Hugo. His language is never temperate. Either he worships almost fulsomely, or he flares up and glares about in a manner wild enough to terrify the very harpies and furies. We can not help overhearing them as they quote Lord Byron about his detractor:

"Had he been one of us he would have made an awful spirit!" *

Indeed, something histrionic there is in the utterances of this bard. A man can not be chronically on the tripod, inhaling fumes of sincere Pythoness madness. It has become a set manner, no doubt a trick of style of which he is barely aware. If he opens his mouth he roars, unless he happens to be tripping with rope-walker's agility about some cradle, executing antics, which are due, we fancy, less to paternal passion than to a frantic worship of Victor Hugo, who was so notoriously addicted to gracious poetic sessions in a grandfather's chair. Who knows if his political fervors also were not communicated to him from the great French "half charlatan, half genius," as Matthew Arnold was imprudent enough to call him.

Yet, who could better dress cap-a-pie in chain

* Byron's *Manfred*, Act 2, Scene 4.

mail forged of close verse than this wonderful word-smith has done, the doctrine that all these "hopes and fears," which enter unbidden our disbelieving soul, do not indeed proclaim the deity of Blougram's "Grand Perhaps," but bear clear witness to the deity of the soul itself?

"But weak is change, but strengthless time,
 To take the light from heaven or climb
 The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
 Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
 But the stars keep their ageless rhyme;
 Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet,
 But the stars keep their spring sublime;
 Passions and pleasure can defeat,
 Actions and agonies control,
 And life and death, but not the *soul*.
 Because *man's soul is man's God* still, . . .
 Save his own soul's light overhead,
 None leads him, and none ever led,
 Across birth's hidden harbor bar,
 Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
 Through age that drives on toward the red
 Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
 To the equal waters of the dead;
 Save his own soul he hath no star,
 And sinks, except his own soul guide,
 Helmless in middle turn of tide.*

It is Swinburne who cries:

"Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things."†

But then, we fancy, it is not to the man of bone and sinew, flesh and blood, he ascribes the glory:

"To the pure *spirit of man* that men call God,
 To the high *soul of things*, that is
 Made of men's heavenlier hopes, and mightier memories."‡

* Prelude to Songs before Sunrise, St. 14-16.

† Hymn of Man, last line.

‡ "Blessed among Women," St. 19.

He has taken to heart Shelley's suggestion :

"It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant when one considers it,
To own that Death itself must be
Like all the rest a mockery." *

For if "God" is "the shade cast by the soul of man," "Death" is "the shadow cast by life's wide wings." †

Whether we ought to accept Mr. Swinburne as an accredited teacher may be tested by his own words. He himself tells us that :

"only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul." ‡

He adds also that "the sacred spaces of the sea" are "Known of souls only, and those souls free." ||

I shall not take it upon myself to say whether or not Mr. Swinburne be qualified to "prophesy;" only it would seem that of serene composure, and superb freedom of soul there is slight evidence in his wonderful verse. He has burned many men of straw with inquisitorial zeal, but the realities they represented still live to torture him and like-minded disbelievers.

4. DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, realist and symbolist, attempts, as we suggested before, "to increase the power of faith by artificial stimulation sufficient to make it quasi-independent of opinions and convictions." (p. 102.) How has he succeeded?

* Conclusion to Sensitive Plant, St. 4.

† Genesis, in Songs before Sunrise, St. 5.

‡ Prelude to Songs before Sunrise, St. 17.

|| Ib., St. 19.

First, let us make sure by quotation that he is an agnostic.

“Let lore of all Theology
Be to thy soul what it *can* be :
But know, —the power that fashions man
Measured not out thy little span
For thee to take the meting-rod
In turn, and so approve on God
Thy science of Theometry.”*

Theology plainly *can* be something to some souls. It was to his own *something*. What, we know. Of all remorseless, earnest poems, perhaps the most wonderful is “The Cloud Confines,” with its fearfully bitter refrain :

“The day is dark, and the night,
To him that would search their heart; . . .
Deep under deep unknown
And height above unknown height. . . .
no word comes from the dead,
Whether at all they be,
Or whether as bond or free,
Or whether they too were we, . . .
What of the heart of hate. . . .
War that shatters her slain,
And peace that grinds them as grain? . . .
What of the heart of love . . .
Thy bells prolonged into knells,
Thy hope that a breath dispells,
Thy bitter forlorn farewells,
And the empty echoes thereof?”

And, summing up in one tremendous stanza all the agony of agnosticism which has not learned as yet aloofness from our pitiful conditions and indifference to our persistent needs, he cries :

“The sky leans dumb on the sea,
Aweary with all its wings;

* Soothsay, St. 12.

And, oh! the song the sea sings
 Is dark everlastingly.
 Our past is clean forgot,
 Our present is and is not,
 Our future's a sealed seedplot,
 And what betwixt them are *we*?
 We who say as we go,—
 'Strange to think, by the way,
 Whatever there is to know,
 That shall we know one day.' *

Who possesses more power of realistic reproduction than the poet of "Jenny?" What poem is more terribly true in all its details of suggestive sensations than "My Sister's Sleep?" Are not "Even So," "Sudden Light," "The Honey-Suckle," "The Woodspurge," and "Possession," pieces of self-dissection, characterized throughout by a scientific precision which no psychologist (not even Robert Browning) could surpass? Even if they are, as some assert, analyses of more or less diseased or extraordinary states of soul, studies in psychic pathology have their value. Is there in them any thing mystical?

"There is . . . in possession still
 A further reach of longing." †

Yes; but is that longing a witness to something invisible now, which can satisfy it? Perhaps we are discouraged, if we nurse any such hope, by the fact that the "thinned, harried blossom" was thrown away when confronted by the "virgin lamps of scent and dew," ‡ yet the original desire was quenched, now that it could be perfectly gratified, and they remained unpicked. That when we are greatly agitated, the

* The Cloud Confines.

† Possession.

‡ The Honey-Suckle.

senses respond naturally, and seem to throw off the yoke of experience, so that the sea and sky seem to lie in a continuous flat, vertical surface "one wall"—all depth and solidity lost—nothing above us and nothing below ;* that when sorrow is especially keen we are almost "beside ourselves," and the disengaged faculties work in a surprisingly collected mechanical way, so that of our absolute grief we get only an unrelated botanical fact ; † that at times we are awed by inexplicable memories, as though all the present had been acted out once before ‡—all this is certainly true observation. No theory is based on them. They are left as precise pictures of psychic experience to speak for themselves. In "Sea Limits," perhaps, we have got one step farther. A kind of maze surrounds us. We do not know our way out. The effects produced on us by causes apparently most unlike are much the same. Are we, therefore, to ascribe to them a unity of origin, or indeed of present being?

"Earth, sea, man, are all in each." §

Why it is that we so obstinately associate external phenomena with certain internal experiences with which, so far as we know, they were never more than fortuitously coincident—who can say? To a man who has *lived* at all events :

"Sea and wind are one with memory." ||

Are not, may be, external phenomena the manifestations to us of the psychic experiences of invisible beings akin to us? Are not these irrational associations due to subtle sympathy with them? Of course, we do not

* Even So. † The Woodspurge. ‡ Sudden Light.

§ The Sea-limits.

|| Penumbra, last line.

know. In our utter ignorance we may allow ourselves to dream. Our limited scale of sensations, and the possible movement of its limits upward and downward, would let us conceive of the possibility of living, thinking societies all about us, in whose midst we "live and move and have our being," we all but unconscious of them, and they unconscious or not of us—who knows?

At once we feel a desire to explore these regions closed to man. We hear of the past—miracles, ghosts, witchcraft, magic! The Roman Church to-day makes thaumaturgic wonders of her sacraments.

What if in all these distorted records of real human experience,—even though to some extent morbid,—there lurk some little grain of truth with which we have not reckoned? Are we not even now peering across thresholds, straying into borderlands, creeping into valleys of mystery between the mountains of familiar fact?

In this quickened sense of wonder there is an anodyne for the ache of doubt. Faith, now robbed of definite intellectual support, and about to die, feels once more a heightened pulse. To Father Hilary,

"the breath
Of God in man that warranteth
The inmost, utmost things of faith,"*

is "Awe,"—and if the organ tones, the chants, the vestments, the incense, the candlelight, mingled with stained sunshine and purple gloom, the sacring bell, the elevated host,—if the silence, like arctic cold, bind the conflicting sea of people into one solid sympathy

* World's Worth, St. 3.

of pure white peace and serene communion under an auroral sky of mystery, then surely is it well to spend an hour with Father Hilary, and know "the worth" of our world at length:—

"Oh, God! my world in thee!"

Do we wonder that "the Blessed Damozel" was written? Yet, even when thus abandoning himself to theology, and letting her be to him all she *could*, Rosetti did not forsake his grasp on present fact. All along we are made to feel that the poem is the record of a dream, a dream woven of rare interpretations of ordinary sense stimuli: yellow autumn leaves flitting down in showers; a glimpse of wheat sheaves in some harvested field; and bird-song like a handful of pearls flung into crystal glasses; a glint of blue, sudden and unexpected; and the quick drip of drops from mist-moistened branches in the very gust of wind that betrayed the clear sky one moment overhead.*

But in *Rose Mary* we have Rosetti's masterpiece. Who does not forget his own agnosticism, be it never so belligerent, as he reads—if he reads at all—this marvelous poem? One is drenched, I will admit, in a heavy atmosphere of over-faith, but is not that

* Are not Mr. Max Nordau's comments on this poem a most delightful piece of learned ignorance and willful stupidity? (Cf. *Degeneration*, pages 87–91.) Why did this doctor, enamored of criticism, insane and foaming at the mouth, not acquaint himself more thoroughly with our poet? If he had, how he would have relished Rosetti's Blake-cult! And how, had he read the *Essay* on Blake, or the *Essay* on Victor Hugo, would it have fared with poor Mr. Swinburne! Verse is licensed by all to be a little wild and fantastic—but prose? What a horrible case of degeneration could not have been made out!

wholesomer than the cruel thin, cold air, which the lungs refuse, on peaks of barren knowledge?

In the great sonnet series, together with some poems not in sonnet form, we find a tale of life and love, of faith and doubt. You object that it is a river losing itself in Sahara sands? True. But why? For the very reason that makes it so real. After all, we are not otherwise now than *in the flesh*. To anticipate the time when we shall be bodiless is absurd. The relations of bodies serve as a continuous orchestral accompaniment to the broken melody of soul. Certain forms, tones, color combinations, postures, are indissolubly tangled with our loves and hates. Her body *he* knows not from her soul. He can not. That her soul lives he *knows*, because her body testifies it to his senses. In absence, it is memory and imagination at his bidding that furnish her soul with a body. And memory and imagination do not always do so well. Let the lovers sit down in the same room, each busy at a different task, and he feels all the while her presence. Separate them many miles, and only at happy intervals is she felt to be near. Let death intervene, and then surely only at very rare moments does his soul cry:—

“Your heart is never away,
But ever with mine, forever,
Forever without endeavor,
To-morrow, love, as to-day;
Two blent hearts never astray,
Two souls no power may sever,
Together, O my love, forever!”*

* Parted Presence, St. 6.

At other moments, far commoner, comes the aching consciousness :

“She is hence and I am here.” *

At other moments, in fact, it needs an argument to prove to himself that he does not forget :

“Didst ever say, ‘Lo, I forget?’
Such thought was to remember yet:
Gaze onward without claim to hope
Nor gazing backward court regret.” †

It is this mystery of death which he compares to the

“Heath,
Forest and water, far and wide,
In limpid starlight glorified,” ‡

which imparts so peculiar a sense of bewilderment to many of the sonnets.

“Cling heart to heart, nor of this hour demand,
Whether in very truth, when we are dead,
Our hearts shall wake to know Love’s golden head
Sole sunshine of the imperishable land,
Or but discern, through night’s unfeatured scope,
Scorn-fired at length the illusive eyes of Hope.” ||

“O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,
How then should sound upon Life’s darkening slope,
The ground whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death’s imperishable wing.” ¶

“A wayfarer by barren ways and chill,
Steep ways and weary, without her thou art,
Where the long cloud, the long wood’s counterpart,
Sheds double darkness up the laboring hill.” ¶

* A Death-parting.

† Soothsay, St. 14.

‡ Portrait, St. 9.

¶ Sonnet 43.

¶ Sonnet 4.

¶ Sonnet 53.

What an interpretation of the heart by an intuitive recognition of its moods in nature! Nature is not personified, and yet she is full of man. What poems in single words! What richness of music! What a startling observation of details so meaningless that they overwhelm one with half-forgotten associated meanings!

“Not I myself know all my love for thee,
 How should I reach so far who can not weigh
 To-morrow’s dower by gauge of yesterday?
 Shall birth and death and all dark names that be
 As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
 Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
 And shall my sense pierce love, the last relay
 And ultimate outpost of eternity?”*

How blessed a thing that he did not torture his heart to explain the “why” of love! His very skepticism delivered him from such aimless, love-killing self-scrutiny. The loud sea of mystery on which death and birth open; those “ultimate things unuttered” behind the “shaken shadow intolerable” which serves them as “frail screen;”† the impenetrable “distances beyond the utmost bound of thought;”‡ all these are God to him. And when he tries to name Him he utters “only the one Hope’s one name” in a whisper the readers of his poems must not be allowed to hear from him, lest they conjure with it, and wreck for him his wonder-world beyond the grave!

5. MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Such kinship as Rossetti bears to the Coleridge of *Christabel* and of the *Ancient Mariner*, Matthew Ar-

* Sonnet 34.

† Sonnet 97.

‡ Sonnet 73.

nold bears to Wordsworth. Some of us had strange experiences when first we read Arnold. Did we approach him as we did Swinburne? We did not need to find in Arnold's letters the following assurance that he took his poetic calling seriously:—

“To attain or approach perfection in the region of thought and feeling, and to unite this with perfection of form, demands not merely an effort, a labor, but an actual tearing of oneself to pieces which one does not readily consent to (although one is sometimes forced to it) unless one can devote one's whole life to poetry.”*

That he sought to attain perfection of thought and feeling, and to marry this perfection to that of form, we feel in almost every poem. But the man has something disappointing in him. He is “unstable as water.” The Moon rightly says to him:

“Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possessed
And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?”†

What a master at diagnosis! What an unsatisfactory prescriber! No sooner do we think we shall have at length the solution of our woes—it is at his tongue's end—than it eludes him and us, and he gives us instead some beautiful bit of landscape painting, some snatch of rare music remembered just in

* Letters of Matthew Arnold, Vol. I, p. 72.

† “A Summer Night,” p. 279 (Macmillan's 1 vol edition).

time to save him from embarrassment, and us from positive distress of soul.

We are not so unreasonable as to expect of him a clear exposition of something which to be known must be personally experienced. We are prepared to admit that even with the most fortunate of poets :

“ Weak is the tremor of pain
That thrills in his mournfulest chord
To that which once ran through his soul.
Cold the elation of joy
In his gladdest, airiest song,
To that which of old in his youth
Filled him and made him divine.
Hardly his voice at its best
Gives us a sense of the awe,
The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom,
Of the unlit gulf of himself.” *

But why should he not be able to “speak out?” Was he not endowed with the requisite “sad lucidity of soul?” † If such be the price

“ The Gods exact for song :
To become what we sing ” ‡

he paid it by singing what he had become. True, we rarely, if ever,

“ Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained ;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained,” §

but our thought, if it is clear, we can communicate. And that Arnold must have had some solution of the great question of life we can not but believe from the fact that he tells us the poet’s business is to help us forget “Such barren knowledge awhile” § as fills

* The Youth of Man, p. 267.

† Resignation, p. 55.

‡ The Strayed Reveller, p. 194.

§ The Buried Life, p. 282.

§ Heine’s Grave, p. 331.

us with secret unrest, while notwithstanding he follows the example of Byron, and exhibits the sores of his soul. This he surely could not have done with decent consistency had he not thought himself possessed of a salve for each sore, and that by exhibiting the sores he could more effectively recommend the salve to similarly stricken souls.

Yes, he must have—indeed his poems show he did have—answers to the question—only, perhaps, he never trusted entirely in any one of them, and with his constitutional dislike for continuous abstract thinking never “gave himself a clear account of the good they had done him” severally, and could do the world. That would have involved their comparison and systemization.

No man of modern times was more aware of the hollowness of our world :

“ Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our labored, puny passion-fits.” *

No man more fully realized that, in view of our present frivolousness, caprice, and lack of self-reverence, it is well if our

“ . . . unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life ” †

remains ungratified. He sympathized with

“ The spirit of the world,
Beholding the absurdity of men,—
Their vaunts, their feats,”—

and was not surprised that he

“ . . . let a sardonic smile,
For one short moment, wander o’er his lips,” ‡

* Urania, p. 204.

† The Buried Life, p. 283.

‡ Heine’s Grave, p. 334.

for he knew that

“one thing only has been lent
To youth and age in common—discontent,”*

and that this is no new thing but

“That wild, unquench’d, deep-sunken old-world pain”†
which the nightingale sang of old in Greece, and sings
now in London suburbs. Sophocles, when he heard
the Ægean Sea, caught the same “eternal note of
sadness:”

“the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery.”‡

Indeed, things are worse with us to-day—
much—we

“Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives.”||

And who, therefore, in spite of all our energy,

“Never once possess our soul
Before we die.”§

We have come too late into this world, not to

. . . “despise
The *barren* optimistic sophistries
Of comfortable moles, whom what they do
Teaches the limit of the just and true
(And for such doing they require not eyes).”¶

Yes, and these sophistries are *known* to be barren.

“Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action’s dizzying eddy whirl’d,
The something that infects the world.”**

* Youth’s Agitations, p. 36.

† Philomela, p. 203.

‡ Dover Beach, p. 212.

|| The Scholar Gypsy, p. 296.

§ A Southern Night, p. 314.

** Resignation, p. 58.

¶ To a Republican Friend, 1848, p. 6.

I. Two facts, at last analysis, confront us, the insufficiency of self to self and the need, therefore, of perfect sympathy; the insufficiency of scope the actual world gives the self, and the need, therefore, of modifying the world, and, if that be impossible, the self. With both these facts Arnold deals.

(a) No one has ever expressed so well as he our soul-solitariness.

“The affinities have strongest part
In youth, and draw men heart to heart,
As life wears on and finds no rest,
The individual in each breast
Is tyrannous to sunder them.”*

True, but even in youth, if we only knew, between the shores of these island-souls of ours, some cruel God has put

“The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.”†

We feel that we were once

“Parts of a single continent.”†

We can not help believing that

“The same heart beats in every human breast;”‡
and we know that only

“One common wave of thought and joy
Lifting mankind”||

will give us contentment ever. Faith used to do this for us, but alas!

“The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl’d.
But now I only hear

* Rossetti’s *Soothsay*, St. 6.

† *Switzerland*: 5 *Isolation*, p. 183-4.

‡ *The Buried Life*, p. 282.

|| *Obermann*: *Once More*, p. 358.

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world." *

Therefore, we turn, with a species of despair, to a personal particular sympathy, a single instance of human communion. We must make the relation of some chosen individual to us so intimate and sufficient that the soul can endure to be cut off, if need be, from all others.

"Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night." *

To love, Rossetti turned. He, too, put this tremendous strain upon love. He, however, found no threatening dangers, till his hopes were wrecked on the sunk reefs of death. Matthew Arnold finds this boat of love utterly unable, even at the outset, to bear him on the seas of his distress. We seem to have "no natural right" † to any friends, no home for the soul seems "destined to be ours." † Each individual clings tenaciously to his past. But a "different past," ‡ so clung to, is a barrier to mutual understanding. Even understanding friends, starting with us on the same quest, are "lost in the storm." || Self-knowledge is wanting as the condition of the knowledge of others:

* Dover Beach, p. 212.

‡ Switzerland Parting, p. 178.

† Human Life, p. 40.

|| Rugby Chapel, p. 324.

“What heart knows another?
Ah, who knows his own?”*

Besides,

. . . . “time’s current strong
Leaves us true to nothing long.”†

He can not blame any one for not being constant in intense love for him. His heart he knows,

“To be long loved was never framed;
For something in its depths doth glow
Too strange, too restless, too untamed.”

After separation he may similarly expect to find himself not loving her he chose, because he sees all her

. . . . “being rearranged,
Passed through the crucible of time,”‡

as his has likewise been.

“Our true affinities of soul.”||

We can not then expect to learn here and now. To some other life must be postponed the serene greeting “across infinity.”||

Remembering, then, Wordsworth’s Green Linnet he realizes that happy souls “ask no love” and “plight no faith:”

“For they are happy as they are.”§

It may be that we shall have this perfect chance for love only when we shall not need it, and therefore no longer seek it.

(b) Baffled in the direction of soul-satisfying personal love, he directs our eyes toward culture, “knowing the best that has been thought in every age” as

* Switzerland, 2, Parting, p. 178. † A Memory Picture, p. 25.

‡ Switzerland, 7, The Terrace at Berne, p. 186.

|| Switzerland, 3, A Farewell, p. 180-1.

§ Euphrosyne, p. 205.

a basis for a general intellectual sympathy. With Sophocles we must learn to see "life steadily" and see it "whole." * We must try to "gain" "Goethe's wide and luminous view," † accepting his message :

"Art still has truth, take refuge there." ‡

So thanks to wide reading, and seeing all noble "sights from pole to pole," we are to enter into a gracious world of self-delusion. A sympathy with extinct religious faiths may do duty for personal convictions :

"Take me, cowed forms, and fence me round,
Till I possess my soul again." §

In default of this sympathy, "turn to poetry as a criticism of life (under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty) for consolation and stay," § and, if you are yourself a poet at heart, go to nature as he does, and when your head is troubled and your heart aches, seek those mystic exaltations derived from a treatment of nature as symbol of the soul, such illusive consolations, as defying all exact utterance, are offered in their mysterious beauty at the close of "Mycerinus," "Sohrab and Rustum," "Empedocles on Etna," "A Summer Night;" such as in "A Wish" he hopes to die with, fresh in heart and mind. But then there are drawbacks which threaten to render the consolations of culture less and less available. We grow old in soul. We are left with "the fierce necessity to feel," but sooner or later the "power" to feel is taken away. ¶

* Sonnet to a Friend, p. 2.

† Obermann, p. 344.

‡ Memorial Verses, p. 308.

§ La Grande Chartreuse, p. 338.

§ Essay on Poetry.

¶ Tirstram and Iseult, p. 153.

How can we "keep a young lamb's heart among the full grown flocks?" For

"each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must,
And not because we will." *

For, after all, is it not true that old age usually

"Is not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt, prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd;
And weep, and feel the fullness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none." †

Then, even if all this were not so, can we cheat ourselves with such sophistries as he himself assures us do not alter facts at all? ‡

There can be no adequate aesthetic substitute for a desired ethical satisfaction. Moreover, aesthetic productiveness ceases soon after moral and speculative despair sets in. When art has exhausted the momentum given it by faith, it stands still. Aesthetic productions permeated by ethical and metaphysical notions from which we decidedly dissent are, just to the

* Switzerland, 6 Absence, p. 184.

† Growing Old, p. 213.

‡ Resignation, p. 58.

extent of such permeation, offensive. If I am convinced, for instance, that with death all is at an end, I can not see how I shall be comforted by Wordsworth's "Intimations." In fact, I venture to suspect that his great ode would annoy and irritate me beyond all courteous endurance. If art be known for an imposter, we shall lose our joy in art. We shall resent its appeals as trifling with our despairs.

We can, of course, get joy—pure, disinterested, radiant joy—in beauty, as we contemplate nature in her nobler aspects, as we abandon ourselves to the spell of building, statue, picture, poem, or symphony, free creations of man's high art-impulses; and in the study even of the religious and philosophic systems man's mind and heart have once been pleased to dwell in, one can and often does experience a strange aesthetic thrill, when overcome with the sense of the vast output of spiritual energy they represent; but the true peace of soul, the cessation of bitter disappointment when what you feel to be your just expectations of dominant holiness and loveliness in the actual life of man are not fulfilled, the removal of all ache of loneliness from lack of a friend and a God can not be so obtained.

II. The second fundamental proposition of pessimism is that the world about us is unable to serve the soul. It does not and can not be brought to conform with our ideal of a world. Unless, therefore, we can bring to bear on our soul the steady transforming power of will, so as to alter the demands we make of the world to what it is able and likely to yield us,

every day will be one of discontent and disappointment.

Now, this may be done in two ways. Either by limiting our desires, extirpating such as are incapable of fulfillment in this life, in order to concentrate the soul's power of enjoyment: a doctrine like that of Epicurus, such as we have found Mr. Swinburne adopting, and which bears strong likeness to the Wordsworthian, or we quench all outgoing desires altogether; draw the soul back upon itself, making the soul find its satisfaction not in what it has, or can get, but in what it is, and can become; a doctrine like that of Epictetus, and one which no English poet has so earnestly preached as Clough.

(c) Let us try first the Epicurean solution, in which the will is to save us from pessimism by a restriction of the free life of desire, emphasizing without regret our individuality. "For a quiet and a fearless mind"* all "passionate hopes" will be wisely "resigned." We shall not trust in "spells" magical or natural to alter our environment and save us so from terror.

"Mind is the spell which governs earth and heaven,
Man has a mind with which to plan his safety."†

The explanation of any successful career is the same as that of Wellington's:—

. . . "wit,
Which saw one clue to life, and followed it,"‡

or, what is the same, knowledge of its real needs by a true self-study:—

"Once read thy own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears;

* Resignation, p. 57.

† Empedocles on Etna, p. 223.

‡ Sonnet to the Duke of Wellington, p. 4.

Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years.

Sink in thyself! There ask what ails thee at that shrine."*

We are, so far as can be ascertained, the only

"Bafflers of our own prayers, from youth to life's last scenes.

We would have inward peace,

Yet will not look within;

We would have misery cease,

Yet will not cease from sin;

We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means."†

Nor will any imagined after-life compensations seriously be looked for by the reasonable man. Is it not far wiser to alter his demands than first to complain over this world, and then set his imagination to creating for himself an illusory world beyond, unseen, the object of an irrational faith, a world which shall be supposed capable of satisfying these demands? Were it not wise to slay our sheep if we have no pasture for them? They will hardly fatten on wind for all our efforts:

"Fools! that so often here

Happiness mocked our prayer,

I think, might make us fear

A like event elsewhere;

Make us, not fly to dreams, but *moderate desire*."‡

And for those who conscientiously "moderate desire"

"who know

Themselves, who wisely take

Their way through life, and bow

To what they can not break,

Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate bliss*?"‡

Making, in Mr. Swinburne's striking words, the "spirit" one with the "eyes," nor seeking "stars by

* Empedocles, p. 227.

† Id., p. 230.

‡ Id., p. 235.

day" and "light and heavy heat of day by night," sets us right with our world:

"I say: Fear not! Life still
Leaves human effort scope,
But, since life teems with ill, -
Nurse no extravagant hope;
Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair."*

To all this, however, a ready answer comes. One can not so easily be resigned to what is repugnant. Doubtless there are happy natures fortuitously tuned to the same pitch as the world. As a matter of fact, does any man exercise such control over himself as Empedocles enjoins? Is it not, perhaps, mere vanity—such as that which calls "lightness, wisdom," and "hardness, force"†—which honors the want of strong desires and vehement passions with the name of painfully acquired self-mastery?

For our disease is not so difficult after all to discover. Man "fights" with "his lot." And why?

"'Tis that he makes his *will*
The measure of his *right*,
And believes nature outraged if his will's gainsaid,"‡

instead of learning what is his *right* from what is his *need*, and from what is actually *furnished* for his enjoyment. Our unrest originates, then, in a delusion we can if we choose dispel:

"Born into life!—who lists
May what is false hold dear,
And for himself make mists
Through which to see less clear;
The world is what it is, for all our dust and din."||

The fate we have to complain of, we make. We

* Empedocles, p. 236.

† Switzerland, 3, A Farewell, p. 180.

‡ Empedocles, p. 227.

|| Id., p. 229.

are self-predestined to misery only by our foolish deeds, which entail certain objectionable consequences.

“ We do not what we ought,
 What we ought not, we do,
 And lean upon the thought
 That chance will bring us through ;
 But our own acts, for good or ill, are mightier powers.” *

Is it not true that

“ Wordsworth’s eyes avert their ken
 From half of human fate ” †

by nature, rather than by art ? Is it not just because Wellington saw in his blindness *only* “ one clue to life ” that he was able to follow it ? And even, supposing this not to be so, are we all born with wills strong enough for such a task as “ clipping the wings of hope ? ” Are we ready to do violence to ourselves for the sake of enjoyment ?

There is the compulsory self-limitation of old age, and so far as we can judge it is not productive of *resignation*, nor of wisdom. “ Our passions ” are blotted “ from our brain,” but not by “ wiser thoughts and feelings.” ‡ And if nature succeeds so ill with us, shall we succeed better with ourselves ?

Besides, we were rash to assume control of our being. Our instincts surrender at once all their work to us. We shall have to look at the clock to learn if we are hungry, and consult the thermometer to feel if we are hot or cold ; the natural freedom, changed to uneasy constraint ; the freedom from care, for a daily self-schooling. Soon we grow pedantic and whimsical. “ Thought ” becomes our slave-master when “ sense ”

* Empedocles, p. 230.

† Obermann, p. 344.

‡ Switzerland, 6, Absence, 184.

has been made to surrender his lordship.* And pleasure can not be ever caught when pursued, or planned for, whether directly, or indirectly. If then, we knew ourselves, we could not be sure to profit by that difficult knowledge. Empedocles commits suicide, not trusting himself to carry out his theory of life in a consistent practice. It is very well for Wellington, Epicurus, or Wordsworth. It makes eloquent reading in the stanzas of Swinburne. Still, it smacks of compromise. After we have adapted our desires to *our* lot, lo, our lot changes! To adapt our desires to *any* lot, means to kill desires altogether. Only indifference can never be surprised. But for indifference there is no reward of pleasure. Wordsworth after all had his cottage and postmastership; Epicurus his gardens of fair fame; and Wellington his lucky Waterloo!

(d) While it is easy to see that "indifference" can get no reward from that with reference to which it exists, yet, if there be some other source of satisfaction than the world and what it conditions, the utter extinction of desire might not be without rewards. For the "light" we would gladly give up the "storms of love."† If the soul itself be man's supreme good, and God; if it be true that

"Still doth the soul from its lone fastness high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send;
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die,
And while it lasts we can not wholly end;"‡

if it is possible to

"Rally the good in the depths of thyself," ||

* Empedocles, p. 251.

† Switzerland, 6, Absence, p. 184.

‡ Palladium, p. 273.

|| The Youth of Man, p. 272.

and so to find that

“The aids to noble life are all within;” *

if it be indeed true that “life consisteth not in the multitude of things which a man possesseth,” because our life brings with it, when intense enough, its own sufficient bliss; then, an adverse environment can be smiled upon, and solitude become a source of happy pride:—

“Alone the sun arises and alone
Spring the great streams.” †

That our guiding impulses come to us as waves—that there are troughs between the crests—does not by any means hinder us from leading a steady life. There is no need of a continual vision of God. To see Him now and then is enough.

“We can not kindle when we will
The fire which in our hearts resides;
The Spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.‡

Perhaps, indeed, they can be better fulfilled when new “insight” does not perplex us by a competition of interests.

Until we have “the witness in ourselves,” we must accept the testimony of others. How do we know that goodness is worth every thing? That it is a sufficient compensation? Upon reflection, the only possible optimism, secure and stable, is obtained by concentrating all the soul’s desires upon its own moral development. For it is clear that to this all things, all

* Sonnet, *Worldly Place*, p. 170.

† In *Utrumque Paratus*, p. 44.

‡ *Morality*, p. 277.

persons, all circumstances can be made to contribute equally; that with this for single object, disappointment is impossible; that in Scripture language, "to them that love God all things work together for good" with an infallibility such as makes a perfect "faith," the reverse of "worry," the normal state of heart. But supposing there be no answer to the question, "What is evolution for?" except "evolution!" will the heart be altogether satisfied?

Suppose we have, as in his youth Arnold had, some one near to us who makes us believe that goodness, of which we read in the annals of heroism, is no unfounded tradition. Suppose we can say with him to some dear friend:

"through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and *blest*
By former ages. . . ."*

—and what a glorious thing it is to be able to say this to a father!—still are we not with that very word "blest" bringing in, inevitably, the thought of a reward all the more real because spiritual, not sensual? Is the last word "growth?" Is it not "bliss?" Nature's usual lesson may be, "bear rather than rejoice," † but, nevertheless,

"A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy;" ‡
for ripeness, perfection, completion seem to us always to involve necessarily a transcendental self-enjoyment. And, *as a fact*, does the "good man" get that reward of his service?

In the very fact that goodness in others, when

* Rugby Chapel., p. 326.

† Resignation, p. 58.

‡ Sohrab and Rustum, p. 64.

really seen, creates love, and that to be beloved is the supreme desire of the heart, does there not seem to lurk a hint that "growth" is for love's sake? Yet do we not proverbially stone our prophets and malign our benefactors? Do they not always get honors posthumously? Is not our love shown in tombs, monuments, biographies, for which the man would care nothing were he here with us, and which so far as we know he does not see?

But we seem to forget that the truly "good" of whom we speak are self-dependent; that this supposition of a need in them of being beloved is a gratuitous inference from the fact that we must somehow express our love for them. The truly good are as the stars :

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."*

It is only because we never fully experienced the bliss of doing and being, that we imagine there is any need of an after-life to him who lives this life well. It is only he who fails here, who can have any interest

* Self Dependence, p. 276.

in another life; the good man does not fear death.
Only he who yet must pray that he be made to feel

“That there abides a peace . . .
Man did not make and can not mar,”*

who still is in want of

“The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others,”*

only he fears death, and for the reason that he has
not yet “begun to live.”* But for him there can
hardly be any after life. Shall he who has failed here
be given a better world to fail in once again?

“No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun.”†

Equally, then, if there be no second life, or if
there be, the divine word is: “Pitch this one high.”‡

(e) But Arnold, the critic, has told us conduct is
three-fourths of life. Good; and what is the other
fourth? Granted that righteousness brings a great
inherent bliss with it; still it is not the entire bliss of
which man is capable. The other fourth of life should
be put under contribution.

Suppose that other fourth were culture? Con-
duct, and culture? Suppose we unite to the satisfac-
tion of goodness, the satisfaction of an unsordid play
of mind and heart on what is beautiful? Suppose
the aesthetic compensation for the poverty of life,
which a little earlier in this paper we found to be of
itself insufficient, is joined to this ethical compensa-
tion? Will not thus a fifth solution of the problem
of life be found in a combination of second and

* Kensington Gardens, pp. 285-6.

† Sonnet. Immortality, p. 173.

‡ Sonnet—The Better Part, p. 172.

fourth?*" Will not this one be both sentimental, then, and rational, both of instinct and of will, of moral repression compensated by aesthetic expansion? Will it not satisfy the whole being of man, and recommend itself more strongly than can any other agnostic solution?

"Agnostic" solution, have we said? Is it "agnostic?" "We do not know"—well; but we must feel things beyond our ken, says Clough, and so "believe;" we will "feel," and try to be content with mere feeling, says Rossetti; we won't feel any more than we know, says Swinburne; we ought so perfectly to engage our feelings with what we can know now, that we shall be prepared for any thing we may know

* I have arranged my excerpts from Arnold's Poems so as to exhibit in turn four modes of escape from a pessimistic view of life, in two pairs, grouped respectively under the two objections of the pessimist:

I. That the self is not sufficient to the self.

(a) Extend the self by passionate sympathy and great love.

(b) Extend the self by intellectual sympathy and aesthetic expansion. *i. e., culture.*

II. That the actual world does not give the self adequate scope.

(c) Repress desires that can not be satisfied (limit demand to supply).

(d) Turn all desires inward, *i. e., moral worth.*

Each of these methods has in turn been rejected as not adequate or available. I mean here to suggest that a fair view of Arnold's own attitude would be

(e) that "culture" and "moral worth," supplementing one another, constitute together a fifth, and reasonably satisfactory escape from pessimism for the man whose *fortunate* lot in life makes it *available*. Personally, I should think it chimerical to hope that mankind at large will be able to *avail* itself of this aristocratic method for giving a soul-satisfying significance to life.

hereafter, says Arnold—though, since these transcendental cravings already exist, we should satisfy them as best we can with such art or portion of nature as symbolizes, and brings into imaginative presence the ideal world now absent, and, for any thing we *know*, nonexistent—perhaps a mere mirage of wilderness skies—the creation of imperious thought whose father was our wish.

But what shall we say to this agnostic gospel? Reverting to our introductory discussion, we repeat, “agnosticism” has perhaps been too exacting. After all, the authority is, as Mr. Swinburne admits, “man’s own soul.” What persists in impressing itself upon our truth-faculty is true. The difference between our dream world and the world of waking hours is that, though the latter passes for us into nothingness during sleep, it always reappears afterward more or less self-identical, while our dreams are not one, but many. A continuous, always consistent dream life, carried on through years, would be as real to us as our waking existence.

The only test then of *truth* is after all *life*. The assumption which alone makes the world intelligible I shall assuredly make. The assumption which alone, in the long run, makes life worth living for men, they will not only allow, but be forced to make. What it is to be in the future we can not, with definite certainty, pronounce. Conditions that have been pressing on us for ages may change, and the assumptions they required become useless and obsolete.

“Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the river of Time . . .

Shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes are his." *

Our business is with man as he now is; and the assumptions required by *us* to lead our life *now* with a noble courage, rather than be led by it, we assuredly should not be so fanatically agnostic as not to venture! Let the future deal with our assumptions as it will and must. Our truth concerns us. The truth for the future concerns the future.

If I can live by "the things I see," and find in them an efficient cause for my becoming my best self, it is well. If not, I must, I ought, I will live by "Faith"—that is, confidence in some undemonstrable proposition, some working hypothesis.

Pessimism, if partial and genuine, is an evil that cures itself. The present is always of authority. That section of the race which really thinks life not worth living will die out in the end, its opinions being an evidence of its unfitness to survive. Only what is vital, furthers growth, and hastens eventual fruition of holiness, loveliness, and bliss *can* in the long run by *living* men be held *true*.

* The Future, p. 288.

IV. THE PROMETHEUS UNBOUND OF SHELLEY—A DRAMA OF HUMAN DESTINY.

1. SHELLEY, REBEL AND REFORMER.

“Unless wariness is used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God’s image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed or treasured on purpose to a life beyond life.”* Such words are never too familiar. They always bear re-reading. It can hardly be impertinent to quote them at the beginning of any critical essay dealing with a veritable work of art. They may serve to tune the writer’s thought, to give him the right pitch of reverence, to make him remember the humbleness of his function—a mere roadside sign-post to urge on weary or perplexed wayfarers to conquer the distance between themselves and what is beautiful, nobly true, and purely good. With what authority, too, do they not come from such a stern prophet of righteousness, the master-singer of Samson Agonistes, himself the blind old giant crushed in the fall of the Philistine temple-roof?

The writer of this paper does not covet the name of critic. What, critic? A critic with a theoretic

* J. Milton’s *Areopagitica*.

measuring rod, declaring by how many inches or feet the Apollo Belvedere is shorter than, say, his ideal kilted highlander! A critic? Busy comparing incomparables, and able in the end to furnish us little more than a substantiation of his own perverse ingenuity?

Nor can there be much gained by the historico-critical method, so-called. After you have given me all the biographic gossip imaginable, how am I nearer an understanding of the finished work of art? Does it help me to be shown how Faust, for instance, was made—piecemeal—and thus to have dispelled forever the illusion of organic unity which certainly it was the constant object of the artist to produce? You may tell me much of the man, but I fancy of his work—which is in all probability greater, wiser, and better than he—of the honey the bees of God stored up in the dead lion's skull—you will not say much (if you follow out this historical method) that will help me to a more loving appreciation. It seems to me—(and why, pray, should one avoid the honest pronoun in the first person singular? should not every one speak for himself?)—a work of art ought to be treated with the same courtesy we accord to a living man. We do not venture to put him on the rack, much less to vivisect him, with a view to obtaining a more intimate acquaintance. We simply let him affect us. If he draws out love, then we are willing to love him, and are sure that time will confound his detractors.

What a blessing it is we know nothing of Homer, next to nothing of Shakespeare, and so very little of Dante Alighieri! We are able to read their works, to see them as they were meant to be seen,

as independent creatures endowed with a spirit that utters itself through them. What imminent danger are we not threatened with, of quite losing our Faust in anecdotes and detailed reconstructions from data more or less accurate and significant? And is it not just possible that our morbid curiosity, our ill-mannered peering into the privacies of Shelley's career, may incapacitate us for experiencing that shock every inspired work is intended to give; for receiving his prophetic message, because, forsooth, we fancy his life was not up to his doctrine? And who, pray, will be the loser, Shelley or posterity? He has done his work. We have ours to do. Our possible depreciation of him, is simply our own impoverishment since resulting in a lessened receptivity on our part for his inspiring message, conveyed through self-subsisting works of beauty. Optimist, by an inner ineradicable conviction, he sought all the time to construct with his acute powers of reasoning a speculative system that should accord with it, that should promise mankind salvation from all social evils. A rebel, of course, he had to be, for those in power believe that all is well, and the privileged classes are not eager to extend their privileges till they shall become universal rights. Like all rebels, he gloried in persecution, and tended at first to imagine that the world is divided into two hostile camps—angels and devils, reformers and their disciples, the foes of reform and their victims. Any thing good or bad that tends to preserve the false equilibrium of compromise is detested. No wonder, the established religion came in for its share of hatred. Only by degrees could Shelley transfer his hatred from the religion of the Christ to what the

average Englishman had made of it; only after a while was he enabled to draw effectually that distinction, which changes a zealous iconoclast into a constructive reformer, and which already appears in his preface to the *Revolt of Islam*: "The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself." It is not by any means easy, in the heat of conflict or of debate, to speak enthusiastically of what after all is only a possibility, and ill, at the very same time, of its actual corruption which is sorely felt, and which in the minds of the multitude is perpetually mistaken for that good thing itself. So it happens that men of one mind appear to contradict one another because of their opposite use of terms. The one praises an institution, having in mind the ideal it should express; the other, out of love for the same ideal, assails it, because it so poorly serves its purpose. Some men pass from the negative to the positive camp of reformers, and always, of course, without changing belief, though their creed (that is to say, the verbal expression of their belief) has undergone a total change. So the inspired boy of Queen Mab became the inspired youth of Laon and Cythna, and in due time the inspired man of *Prometheus Unbound*.

2. THE PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

One grows sufficiently weary, when assured of the inspiration of a work of art by the only possible credential—its power to inspire—when, therefore, certain of the spiritual mission of Shelley—to have constantly set before one a huge "*but*" in the shape

of ugly stories of sexual irregularity and heretical views on the matrimonial question. It sounds somewhat prudish in the devourers of the daily newspaper, as Goethe remarked long ago, to lodge any complaint against even Byron's *Don Juan*; and in the case of *Prometheus Unbound*, at all events, the charge is naively irrelevant. The book is wholesome, and pure as the blue depths of glacier ice above some roaring torrent; the lascivious would like the reading of it as little as a bath in such a torrent. And in the man * the error of his ways was due rather to a theoretic blunder than to any natural perversity. Inoculated with the doctrines of William Godwin, and afterward misarguing that the liberty inherent in spiritual intercourse should be allowed also to characterize the symbolic flesh and its relations—reasoning back by a fallacy from the nature of the thing signified to the nature of the inadequate sign—it would have required perhaps in most men more than one lifetime to convince themselves of their error and to recant. That Shelley recanted we do not mean to insinuate, but, at all events, his most glorious works are free from all shadow of taint.

“The expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature and its destiny; a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul,” as Mrs. Shelley puts the matter rather pathetically in her note to the *Cenci*, was bound to bring him to abandon the epic and romance, and, of course, the drama.

* Cf. “Shelley's Faith,” by Kinton Parks, *Shelley Society Papers*, Vol. I, p. 218: “Shelley's life was a life of almost complete deviation from accepted beliefs, but it was also a life of almost absolute adherence to the principles he professed.”

“The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama is the teaching of the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself, in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant, and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them.”* One feels quite sure that his well-known argument for the moral value of poetry—from the fact that imagination is an essential factor in sympathy, and that sympathy is the very source of true justice, and secret integrity,—must have made clear to his mind the didactic power of objective art. But the almost Pauline passion—the “woe is me if I preach not”—which Mrs. Shelley seems to deplore; in other words, his exalted sense of definite mission and message, made him seek a poetic vehicle for the dogmas which he modestly suggests may do more than works of art without an obvious moral purpose. His prophetic enthusiasm could tolerate no more concreting of the abstract ideal than would fit it for earnest worship. He preferred to indicate rather than to express; to symbolize rather than to en flesh the creations of his spirit. In all exact form there is an inevitable limitation of the manifold possible. Any strictly dramatic embodiment of a passion or idea has much, of course, besides, that is foreign to that mere passion or idea, serving to give it rigidity, as the alloy makes the pure gold fit for current coin. But on this very account do mythological figures, which are not endowed with any details of character, convey more than dramatic impersonations. So the instability of water reflects not

* Shelley's Preface to the *Cenci*.

only the actual moon, but glints of a thousand imaginable moons. Each man, each generation, can define the poet's indefinite symbol so as to satisfy present spiritual needs.

That Shelley should have chosen the Prometheus myth was inevitable. The drama of human salvation, the idea of purification through suffering, could not find a more splendid myth-hero, a more complete poetic expression. To be sure, the story would require not a little refashioning; the situation would have to be interpreted in a new spirit; but the story and the situation could be thus freely treated without any shock to religious preconceptions and associations. Rightly did Shelley point to the "pernicious casuistry" and the possible "something worse" which any treatment of Satan as a hero must engender. Without a doubt, Prometheus, in the handling of Æschylus, had much the same effect on his contemporaries as the Satan of Milton has on us moderns. But Prometheus and Jupiter are no longer closely knit with the hopes and fears of the race, and it is possible now for a poet to make them signify whatever he pleases without any serious danger of arousing bigoted opposition, or of relaxing the beneficent hold of any operative tradition.

Mrs. Shelley is surely right when she says that even the lyrics of *Prometheus Unbound* are full of occult meanings. "They elude the ordinary reason by their abstraction," she adds, "and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. . . . He considered these philosophic views of mind and nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry." While we may not be gifted with a mind as "subtle and penetrating" as Shelley's, if we want to enjoy to

the full his work, we must strive at least to explore its source, Mr. Dowden notwithstanding. "Shelley's ideas are abstractions made from a one-sided view of facts," thinks he, and therefore would he advise the critical student to be blind to them, though they stare him in the face. One is, of course, glad to agree with his opinion that the marvelous witchery of the poem was largely due to Shelley's surroundings at the time of its composition.* Just what these must have been to him we can conclude from the fact that his sublime fifty-second stanza of the *Adonais* is made to end, without any consciousness of bathos, with

"Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, . . . are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak."

"The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in the divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirit even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama." †

Surely we can give these words full weight, without doubting that certain "ideas," true or false, were still more livingly the source of this drama, since these outward conditions furnished a perfect allegory to the senses of those "ideas" that were always present to the poet, and were only on this very account capable of furnishing the inspiration of *Prometheus Unbound*. Nor were the glories of historic ruins invaded by living nature—the sky and sea of Southern Italy—more, after all, to Shelley at work, than the colors on his palet. They did not themselves suggest

* Edward Dowden's *Life of P. B. Shelley*, Vol. I, p. 263.

† Shelley's Preface.

the method of their combination on the canvas. Before the stir of his receptive powers by the baths of Caracalla in springtime had occasioned the sympathetic activity of his creative imagination, we know that the faith of the prophet Shelley had already compelled the poet Shelley to consider the Prometheus myth as a good vehicle for his favorite doctrine. Wondrous sensations and emotions came opportunely from without to furnish the inherently sublime conception with an opulent beauty, a serene loveliness of form.

To enjoy these is well; but surely, if viewed as a soulless body, they will prove less attractive than if we allow them to be animated and organized for us by the same spiritual Faith under whose conscious control they first came into objective, enjoyable being.

The "ideas" and the verse are inseparable. If the "ideas" are so utterly false, we shall have to enjoy the Prometheus under perpetual protest, unless we have sufficient imagination to suppose them true while poring over their utterance. But whether sympathetic or foolishly protestant, we can not be oblivious of these "ideas" without losing that which alone marshals the verses into one poetic "host invincible"—makes of them a "self-existent" organism—a "form more real than living man." (Act I, l. 757.)

3. PROMETHEUS UNBOUND AND FAUST.

The comparison which Mr. Dowden institutes between Goethe's Faust and Shelley's Prometheus need not result disastrously to either. Are not the ideas of the first called "far juster and more profound" merely because their truth is more apparent?

“Humanity is no chained Titan of indomitable virtue. It is a weak and trembling thing.” Is it not perhaps both? “To represent evil as external—the tyranny of a malignant God or fortune, or as an intellectual error—is to falsify the true conception of human progress. The progress which indeed concerns us is that which consists in working out the beast.” May it not be that these two conceptions of evil—as external and as internal—are easily capable of reconciliation? Does not Mr. Dowden himself give us the cue, when he goes on to describe man’s progress in the New Testament phrase as “a *growing* to the fulness of the stature of the perfect man?” “The advance of Faust is from error to truth, from weakness to strength,” etc.—certainly. So is the advance of Prometheus, that is imagined to have taken three thousand years. Only Shelley constantly views this strength, this truth as already immanent in the weakness, in the error; as more real than they, if as yet unmanifest and externally inoperative. True, man appears a trembling thing and may at last *grow* strong, but if so, because all the “perfect man” which is to be evolved in due time is already involved in his present being.

It is not, perhaps, so foolish after all to view the evil as external; it simply signifies your recognition of the good in you,—rudimentary and helpless though it be—as that alone which has a right to exist and perpetuate itself. Not that we want to deceive ourselves into thinking that we have no sin.* If you affirm the sin inheres in *me*, is it not *that* self I am

* 1 John, i., 8.

bound to deny,* to outlaw, which is dead with Christ?† Is not my life ‡—the only life I dare dignify as mine, because it is worthy of a child of heaven—"hid" as yet "with Christ in God."§ We know that, of course, it is not yet made manifest what we shall be,|| but we also know that *we are even now* the sons of God, ¶ and some time must therefore—not merely *may*—be evidently all that such a vital intimacy of relation to God implies.** This, one may object, is mystical language. Why, so then is Shelley's. If it passes in the New Testament, let it pass in Prometheus Unbound, even if alloyed now and then with premature hazarded speculations.

"Veil by veil, evil and error fall."—(Act iii., scene ii., line 62.)

"Foul masks, with which ill thoughts

Hide *that fair being* whom we spirits call man."

—(Act iii., scene iv., line 45.)

And Shelley chooses to see as the spirits see; not with carnal eye.

"Where is the beauty, love, and truth, we seek,

But in our minds?—(Julian and Maddalo, line 174.)

We will therefore do well to "search" for "hidden thoughts," "our unexhausted spirits,"†† for only there shall we find "the deep things of God." In brief, that is to Shelley revelation, which in Faust seems attainment. Shelley perceives the divine in

* ἀπαρνέομαι=utterly to deny, disown, treat as if it were not, leave out of reckoning. Matt. xvi., 24; Mk. viii., 34; Lk. ix., 23.

† 2 Cor. v., 14; 1 Cor. xv., 31; Gal., ii., 20.

‡ Col. iii., 4, and Phil. i., 22.

§ Col. iii., 3.

|| 1 J. iii., 2, 3.

¶ 1 J. iii., 2.

** 2 Pet. i., 4; 1 Cor. xiii., 12; J. xvii., 23.

†† Act iii., sc. iii., l. 35, Pr. Un.

the human,* needing only the *doffing* of the human to be visible in holy splendor; Goethe observes the process—the center of his horizon in the human—and describes sanctification † as a *donning* of the whole armor of God. Both points of view are taken in the New Testament; the vital and the mechanical language are equally admissible to describe this same indescribable change from sinner to saint.

But it would be surely a great mistake to suppose that Goethe viewed the matter thus mechanically. The fact is, since he chose to display in his *Faust* the progress of a soul, and that the source of growth is always hidden—all changes *seem* to be from without—it is only by taking the whole progress for granted, placing his drama at the moment when Prometheus has already “worked out the beast,” that Shelley is able to make us see the growth in spirituality as a revelation of a divine principle, whose presence all along is always clearly discerned by the true seer.

Whether or not Shelley grasped this New Testament mysticism, is not for us to debate. Only, if it can afford an explanation of the language of the *Prometheus Unbound*, would it not be pedantic fanaticism to insist on ruling it out? Mrs. Shelley was, it would seem, conscious of the kinship our poem has to the New Testament, and it seems strange that Mr. Bagehot ‡ should be so perplexed at finding, as a matter

* To reveal His Son in me, Gal. i., 16. Because ye are sons, Gal. iv., 6. Now are we the sons of God, 1 J. iii., 2, etc, etc.

† Put on the new man, Col. iii., 10. Put on the whole armor of God, Eph. vi., 11; Rom. xiii., 12; Rom. xiii., 14; Eph. iv., 24; 1 Thes. v., 8, etc.

‡ Literary Studies by Walter Bagehot, Vol. I, p. 115.

of fact, that Shelley "took extreme delight in the Bible as a composition." If indeed "the least biblical of poets," he is, at all events, often in close sympathy with the utterances of the sermon on the mount, with St. John and St. Paul in their theological epistles; nor are their echoed phrases few in his verse.

Men have built sometimes "wiser than they *knew*." Intuitively they have taken possession of what their intellect did not surmise existed.

It is wonderful how little men are disposed to grant to Shelley great intellectual power, so utterly have they been stunned by his other gifts. And yet, had we nothing but his prefaces, we should surely marvel at his acuteness, sanity, and far-sighted judgment. Did he not understand the relations of art to civilization, and weigh with wonderful sagacity the connection of genius with its age? What of his anticipation of Mr. Taines' theory: "The mass of capabilities remains at every period the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change?"* What of his perception of the power of literature to fashion, or rather indicate, the course of social history? "The great writers of our own age we have reason to suppose the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition. . . . The equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring or is about to be restored."* And all this at a time when critics took for granted that poetry was produced by rules; that gross insults and blatant slander, alternating with

* Shelley's Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*. Cf. Essay: Shelley and Sociology. E. Aveling and E. M. Aveling. Shelley Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 180.

nauseous flattery in the quarterlies, could alter the current of literature; while statesmen fancied the policy of repression would change Englishmen into tame animals, harnessed to the chariot of their political greatness!

As a poet, is it not probable that at times he out-thought his Godwin—the good man by whom desire was calmly set down as a variety of opinion,—substituting desire (the hot desire after man's perfection) for cold opinion—and may not Shelley have thus overtaken other guides more glorious than his worthy father-in-law—some father in spirit of New Testament fame? And Shelley's "Plato," whom the early Christian thinkers of Alexandria loved so much, could not, surely, have made it impossible to accept half-consciously such guidance.

4. THE PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, AN ORGANIC WHOLE.

It is our purpose now to study the Prometheus Unbound as a whole and make it yield its own interpretation; for none can be accepted as satisfactory which fails to take account of it as a whole. It would seem, therefore, that Mr. Wm. M. Rossetti has not altogether solved the difficulty. It was only after carefully considering what he had written that this paper was begun, though the materials had been gathered for some time. "This matter of the secret which Prometheus can reveal for the preservation of Jupiter, as well as the cognate matter of the spousals of Jupiter and Thetis in Act III, appears to me to derive essentially from the Greek myth about Zeus and Prometheus, and not from the ideal system, according to which Shelley has reconstructed the myth; I at any

rate fail to see what the secret could have been according to the system in question.” * Which is the more probable—that the system in question has not been completely grasped, or that Shelley in this work, which he approached so deliberately and at which he confesses much arduous labor, should have utterly failed to make an artistic whole? Why this crude, indigested, foreign matter in the body of the poem? Why the chief dramatic scenes thus alien to the purpose? What makes a work of art a noble success is the complete subserviency of all parts to the organizing idea; to have left in the reconstructed myth any important elements that are meaningless now, would, one must admit, have been to reconstruct it very imperfectly. A theory of interpretation which leaves the secret Jupiter wants Prometheus to reveal a silly memory from *Æschylus*, and the marriage with *Thetis* of Jupiter a mere opportunity for illustrating the old adage, “pride goes before a fall,” must be somewhat defective; or, granting it to be strictly correct, we must capitulate to Shelley’s detractors, who claimed that he “could not construct a whole,” simply allowing ourselves henceforth to rejoice in the beauty of disjointed parts as independent fragments. An effort will, however, be made in this paper to suggest such slight changes in the usual interpretations of some of the dramatic personages as shall allow of the poem’s consistent unity; that is to say, we will strive to adapt our notion of Shelley’s ideal system as held at the time he composed his *Prometheus Unbound* to what seem the requirements of the poem’s own structure,

* Shelley Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 147.

laying every part of the same under contribution (in something like fair proportions to its poetic importance) for the philosophic and religious expositions of the whole. The problems whose solution concerns us are perplexing enough.* That Prometheus represents the prophetic soul of humanity (*cf.* Act III, sc. i, l. 5), or, as Mr. Rossetti puts it, "the mind of man" seems clear beyond a doubt. It is only with this understanding of his signification that there is nothing hyperbolical in the assertion that he gave all that Jupiter has † (Act I, l. 273, and l. 382); that he gave man civilization (Act I, l. 54, and Act II, sc. iv, l. 98); that for this he suffered, and that, in the nature of the case, his repentance of evil should amount to a liberation of himself, and the perfection of the race. Only with this meaning is it explicable that Prometheus, liberated, would spend his life creating and contemplating intellectual and moral ideals (Act III, sc. iii, ll. 22-62).

The meaning of Asia is also quite definite.‡ A

* The secret is, of course, without possible meaning, if the marriage of Jupiter and Thetis is a mere survival. The main object of this paper is, by a particular interpretation of Demogorgon, to give the marriage a real importance, esoteric as well as dramatic, and the secret would then be, as in the Greek work, the direfulness of this marriage which Jupiter looks upon as fortunate.

† *Cf.* Act II, sc. iv, l. 44.

‡ Asia is the "glory unbeheld" (Act II, sc. v, l. 60); the "golden chalice" to the "bright wine" of Prometheus' love, "which else had sunk into the thirsty dust." (Act I, l. 820.) Her "presence" makes her prison beautiful, but, though separated from him, if she would cease, "fade" into nothing "were it not" for Prometheus, the soul of man. (Act I, l. 841.) Her "desire" is "harmonizing

pupil of Godwin could not possibly have viewed the emotive nature as other than the intellect. But were such an *a priori* ground insufficient, we have Shelley's own analysis of "thought," as he conceived the term, into subordinate terms: "Thought . . . and its quick elements, will, passion, reason, imagination,"* which would show the emotive nature of man to be comprised already in Prometheus. the else convenient hypothesis, therefore, that Asia stands for Love, and her sisters for Hope and Faith, can not be accepted. She is not Love so much as the Loveable, that which kindles Love. Mrs. Shelley says she is Nature; Nature, that is to say, in her potential beauty; the dream of the physical world's glory that arose from the calm deep seas as they mirrored the calmer deeper heavens. Panthea declares that

"love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from *her* and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean, and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them." (Act III, sc. v, l. 26.)

this earth with what we feel above" (Act III, sc. v, l. 95), namely, with herself.

"It is true that the sensitive organization of Shelley, shrinking from the rough contact with reality, never quite looked *Nature* in the face; and in the west wind and sunset cloud, in running stream and fragrant flower, he recognized a more benignant manifestation of power than that which he saw in the social state of man, because what he saw reflected by these passive phenomena was in reality the shade of his own soul, and his own soul, being one of the loveliest as well as loftiest that ever passed across the stage of the world, transmuted the visible universe to something after its own likeness."—"Shelley's View of Nature," etc., by Mathilde Blind, printed among the Shelley Society Papers.

* Speech of Ahasuerus in "Hellas."

Asia is not love,* though by her beauty the direct source of it; and, since she is seen in all, causes love to irradiate all.

The mind of man, married to nature, separated, reunited, is then the theme of the whole poem. But our problem lies in the significance of Jupiter and particularly of Demogorgon.

5. PROMETHEUS BOUND.

Before we address ourselves seriously to the solution of the principal enigmas (1) just what Demogorgon must signify in order to play in reality the part which he does in the plot of the poem, and (2) why that part is played, whether at the solicitation of Asia, or by some eternal fate, or by some spiritual necessitation immanent in Prometheus himself (else how shall he realize his ideal of being not the "saved," but the "savior")? Before we launch into these seas of difficult speculation, though guided all the while by the words of the poem itself, it will be, no doubt, advisable to take a glance at Prometheus and Jupiter as they are sketched by Aeschylus of old, against whose solution Shelley protests so strongly in his preface, and from whose understanding of what constitutes the sublimest virtue, he differs *toto cælo*.

In a paragraph or two, it will be easy to summarize their chief characteristics. There is in the poem of Aeschylus a reverence for Zeus (doubtless sincere enough, but not at all akin to esteem), which clashes sorely with the sympathy accorded to his foe and victim. Sin is viewed politically. It is simply

* See ‡ note, p. 161.

resistance to "whoso rules." Hence Prometheus says, without sign of shame or contrition :

"I have known
All in prevision. By my choice, my choice
I freely sinned—I will confess my sin—
And helping mortals, found mine own despair." (l. 313.)*

He defies penalty—a dreaded visitation of woe than death:—

"Why let him do it! I am here prepared
For all things and their pangs." (l. 1111.)

The wrong he complains of is a too severe punishment for his offense; indeed, the base ingratitude of Zeus in failing to balance the offense against former service rendered, and so to remit all otherwise deserved penalty. He hates Zeus; does not fear him, nor reverence him. Against the unwilling servants of Zeus he harbors no malice, but scorns them :

"I would not barter . . .
My suffering for thy service. I maintain
It is a nobler thing to serve these rocks
Than live a faithful slave to father Zeus." (l. 1247.)

He has sympathy for his fellow Titans, and to Oceanus,—who is still left his old free deity and sway,—not surely without some latent contempt, he says :

"I gratulate thee, who hast shared and dared
All things with me, except their penalty." (l. 388.)

He is willing to receive sympathy :

"Think not I am silent thus
Through pride or scorn," (l. 505.)

though he has "done with wail" for his "own griefs" (l. 719), and if he grieves, he does "not therefore wish to multiply the griefs of others." (l. 404.)

* References are to Mrs. Browning's *Prometheus Bound*.

“Upon scorers,” he “retorts their scorn” (l. 150); for Zeus he can fancy no fall worse than one “lower than patience” (l. 1091), and in himself strengthens his pride with a fierce spirit of defiance, so that he himself may endure the unendurable. His comfort is in the absoluteness of Fate:

“Necessity doth front the universe
With an invincible gesture,” (l. 117),

which, though “stronger than his art” (l. 582), is stronger also than his foe, whose fall he foresees, gloating over the thought that

“Zeus
Precipitated thus, shall learn at length
The difference betwixt rule and servitude.” (l. 1101.)

Hence, by anticipation, he shouts to the pusillanimous chorus:

“Reverence thou,
Adore thou, flatter thou, whomever reigns,
Whenever reigning! But for me, your Zeus
Is less than nothing.” (l. 1113.)

However, contempt for Jupiter, and stoic superiority to torture, do not prevent his desiring a covenant with his foe. He speaks of a time when Zeus, humbled,

“shall rush on in fear to meet with me
Who *rush to meet with him* in agony,
To issues of harmonious covenant.” (l. 231.)

He will keep his fatal secret, because,

“By that same secret kept
I ’scape this chain’s dishonor and its woe.” (l. 593.)

And he assures Hermes:

“No tortures from his hand
Nor any machination in the world
Shall force mine utterance, *ere he loose himself*
These cankerous fetters from me” (l. 1174),

implying a willingness to speak the words Zeus wants to hear, and which can alone confirm him in his celestial tyranny, if thus personally released and restored to honor. Of course, since he owes no service,—any possible debt to Zeus being more than canceled by ingratitude and extreme cruelty, as he ironically remarks to Hermes,—he will, of course, not “supplicate him . . . with feminine upliftings of . . . hands, to break these chains.” (l. 1192.)

The picture of Zeus is sufficiently lurid. As a “new-made king,” he is declared by Hephæstus to be “cruel.” (l. 39.) He “metes his justice by his will” (l. 227), is Prometheus’ judgment. Oceanus speaks of him as “reigning by cruelty, instead of right.” (l. 381.) The chorus considers him “stern and cold,” “whose law is taken from his breast” (l. 467), and Hermes assures Prometheus that he is wont to persuade by force :

“Behold,
Unless my words persuade thee, what a blast
And whirlwind of inevitable woe
Must sweep persuasion through thee ” (l. 1202),

and as his authorized mouthpiece and messenger declares the fortitude of Prometheus mere obstinacy and indulgence of “self-will.” (l. 1227.) Strength, the willing slave of Zeus, warns Hephæstos of the danger of sympathizing with the victim of the tyrant’s wrath :

“Beware lest thine own pity find thee out ; (l. 75.)

whilst Hermes considers such sympathy nothing short of “madness.” (l. 1273.)

One wonders how an orthodox Athenean could endure for one minute such a lively portraiture of the Olympian *Father*!

Is it surprising that Shelley "shrank from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the champion with the oppressor of mankind?"

6. SHELLEY'S PHILOSOPHY.

Let us now proceed to give ourselves some account of that "system of ideas," as Mr. Rossetti happily puts it, which Shelley held to be true at this period of his life. He was a thorough-going subjective idealist. From the first two speeches of Ahasuerus, in the lyrical drama "Hellas," we can cull words which will accurately define his position:

"This whole . . .

Is but a vision; . . .

THOUGHT is its cradle and its grave, nor less

The future and the past are idle shadows

Of THOUGHT's eternal flight—they have no being;

Nought is but that it feels itself to be."

"THOUGHT . . .

Alone . . . can not die. . . .

The stuff whence mentality can weave

All that it hath dominion o'er . . .

What has THOUGHT

To do with time or place, or circumstance?"

That this philosophy was also held at the time of the composition of the Prometheus, apart from the general spirit and tendency of the poem, such lines as these suffice to prove:

"THOUGHT . . . is the measure of the universe."

—(Act II, sc. iv, l. 72.)

The mind of the beholder is viewed as the source of the objective being of things:

"Apparitions, dim at first,

Then radiant, as the MIND . . . casts on them

The gathered rays which are *reality*."

—(Act. III, sc. iii, l. 49.)

From this it results, of course, that in the strictest philosophical view of Shelley the whole drama of human salvation takes place both in its subjective and in its ostensibly objective parts within the mind of man, which is Prometheus; so that all the dramatis personae of the poem are really moods or activities of Prometheus, projected upon the blank screen of the unknowable, and his semi-personal relations to these projections represent everlasting facts of his own abysmal being.

Now, let us deduce an ethic from this metaphysic, assuming it to be true for the nonce. Thought—and its living elements, will, passion, reason, imagination—is the framer and orderer and sustainer of the universe; what thought feels itself to be alone is; then surely evil, in every sense, is not necessarily real to the individual, much less to the race. And here it is well to observe that Shelley utterly destroys the basis of both egoism and altruism:

“Talk no more
Of *thee* and *me*, . . .
But look on that which can not change, the One,
The unborn and the undying.”*

“All is contained in each.”*

It is absorption in this One, or more correctly—since the cessation of consciousness were the cessation of being, according to Shelley; and Adonais, for instance, is said still to *be*, though now absorbed, and “doth bear *his* part, while the One Spirit’s plastic stress sweeps through the dull sense world;” (Adonais, st. 43.)—it is conscious union and spontaneous

* Speech of Ahasuerus, “Hellas.”

co-operation with this One which constitutes the goal of being.*

"The One remains, the many change and pass."—(Adonais, st. 52.)

The true course for man is therefore to anticipate, while yet in the flesh, this conscious union with "all," (whereby they cease to be "*many*," and so exposed to the evils of change and chance), by a living energetic sympathy, which Shelley calls "*true* love," to distinguish it from sensual or sentimental affections that "profane" the "word." For true love is not merely

"The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow ;"
—(To —.)

but also, or rather, the power that produces, according to eternal laws, a "kingdom of heaven on earth."

"If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away ;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole ; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared."

—(Epipsychidion, l. 181.)

Now, if evil can for the mere individual, exposed to change and chance and death, by an attitude of his single mind, refusing to recognize evil, by an authoritative denial, a destructive lightning bolt of wholesome will, be annihilated *for him*, how much more certainly can all evil be overcome by the joint fiat of mankind creating a new world of ideal beauty? No wonder, then, we find in Prometheus such lines as

* See Appendix, for a discussion on the meaning of "Annihilation" in Shelley's poetry."

"Man . . . free from guilt or pain
Which *were* for his will made or suffered them."

—(Act III, sc. iv, l. 197.)

Man has been "driven on the wreck of his own will." (Act II, sc. iv, l. 104.) He is a slave, not because he is by nature such, but because "all spirits are enslaved which serve things evil." (Act II, sc. iv, l. 110.) And even such a state is not hopeless.

"This is not destiny, but man's own willful ill."

(Julian and Maddalo, l. 214.)

We, in particular, as individuals, have also some blame for our prostrate condition, and therefore should arouse ourselves :

"It is our *will*

Which thus enchains *us* to *permitted* ill.

We might be otherwise ; we might be all

We dream of, happy, high, majestic."

—(J. & M., l. 174.)

To change this "will" may seem difficult, involving much strain ; it may, indeed, entail martyrdom, but the chances are worth taking, for the present condition is to the sensitive soul aware of

"The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth."

(J. & M., l. 459.)

the worst imaginable condition, and

"We *know*

That we *have* power over ourselves to do,

And suffer—*what*, we know not till we try."

—(J. & M., l. 188.)

In fact, so tremendous is the power of the individual soul that

"Evil minds

Change good to their own nature."

—(Act I, sc. i, l. 389, Pr. Un.)

Man's moral salvation is seen, then, to be an essentially spiritual process ; the battle against evil is

a battle against self; the kingdom of heaven is (so far as it ever will have *objective* being) actually at hand, within reach. In some fabulous golden age, man was sinless through ignorance; if man, having "eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," is now to be redeemed from evil, he has somehow come to know that this redemption must be wrought by wisdom, *i. e.*, the faith, passing into experimental knowledge, that good alone *is*, that evil *seems*, which wisdom can only be gained for man by the suffering that ends in revealing to him his own superiority to suffering, and therefore his independence of regnant evil. Having dared to suffer the uttermost, evil may be "monarch of all spirits," but not of his whose "agony" is "the barrier" to the "else all-conquering foe" (Act I, l. 119), and now that—when Shelley's drama opens—misery has made "Prometheus wise" (Act I, l. 58), "aught evil wish is dead within" (Id., l. 70), and "no memory" even remains "of what is hate" (Id., l. 71), the Godlike has come to conscious mastery in him.

7. PROMETHEUS.

In a sense, of course, Prometheus represents the individual man who is living "in the spirit of this creed,"* though he is rather the soul of mankind, of the race viewed as one,—the human Soul, which is "parceled out" in souls. It is by substituting this, in a measure equivalent conception, for the larger one, that the drama gets what solidity it has with the reader. And this substitution is legitimate since (the less

* Wordsworth's Ode to Duty.

standing for the greater) it readily, as one muses over the drama, fades into a symbol, and then brightens again divinely in the mind as the thing symbolized—the one Soul of the race, one with that of the universe, to become consciously one with which is

“ . . . the death lovers love
Living in what they sought.”

—(The Boat on the Serchio, l. 80.)

Now, when one views Prometheus merely as the individual man defiant of evil “power, which seems omnipotent,” (Act IV, l. 572) as the reformer and helper of men, it is clear that he must suffer at the hands of his fellows. It is as one would suppose. Possession is with the masses not nine but all the ten points of the law. What *seems*, not only has a right to be, but must continue to be and seem. So the would-be redeemer of himself and others is in all appearance a criminal. His doom is certain from the beginning. He desires a change in what the people say *is*; if he says it only *seems* they declare him mad; if he says it must *cease to seem* they declare him an enemy of society; for what the unspiritual think *is*, they also think is *right*.

Prometheus, however, is not an atheist though he is an iconoclast. The distinction between God (the source of our existence) and our conception of God (the source of our thoughts of him and our conduct toward him) must be made. Shelley himself makes it as early as the note to the line in Queen Mab, declaring, “There is no God?” He makes it again in stanzas 27, 28, of the First Canto of Laon and Cythna. He refers to it in the preface to that poem as above quoted. So Prometheus makes the

clear distinction that is indicated by Demogorgon in his answer to Asia: "I spoke but as ye speak" (Act II, sc. iv, l. 112). Men's conceptions of God are often so inadequate as to constitute *the* great barrier forbidding access to Him

"Who shaped us to his ends and not our own,"
to the One who rises day by day to teach

"What none yet ever knew."

—(The Boat on the Serchio, ll. 30-34.)

So, of course, also in the moral and political sphere *what* men think "right" signifies, and *what* men think "happy" signifies, is *the* obstacle that must be removed or overleapt if right is to be reached and happiness to reign. But the masses can not or will not make this great distinction. Prometheus is therefore to them an anarchist, a blasphemous, Godless, immoral, wicked wretch, who must be done to death with the most ingenious devices that will torture life out of the body by exquisite degrees.

"Pangs pass

Slow, ever-moving, making moments be

. . . each an immortality!"

—(J. and M., l. 426.)

And why do the masses feel such senseless rage against Prometheus? They have invested what were once the means with all the sanctity of the end which they no more subserve. To attack these means; to declare them worthless, nay, an impediment, is to impugn the everlasting value of the end. So they deem. Men's notions of what will bring them to the good, they externalize in laws, literatures, rituals, governments. These need perpetual development if they are to continue expressive of the ever-

advancing mind of man, if they are to be operative for good on coming generations. But these, since visible and tangible, are more real to the masses than the spiritual revelation of God, good, and happiness, which is ever alive and growing, yet neither directly visible nor tangible. So, the attempt to quicken now useless institutions by change, is construed as an assault with intent to kill !

“ Where is the beauty, love, and truth we seek,
But in our minds ? and, if we were not weak,
Should we be less in *deed* than in *desire* ? ”

—(J. and M., l. 178.)

In other words, can institutions be allowed to lag behind our convictions ? If they do, are they not a hindrance, a positive evil ? Is it not well to show them such, by letting them slay the righteous and holy reformer ? Will not, then, the claims of those who confound means with ends, and what is worse obsolete means with everlasting ends, be proved absurd ? Thus is the individual justified in dying for his Utopia, because by so dying he brings it from the clouds of glorious dreams into the world of solid living fact. It is, however, not as an individual hero, but as a personification of the general human soul that he “ works out his salvation ” and that of the world. And surely it is a satisfaction to quote Mr. Rossetti : “ I quite dissent from those . . . who consider that the Titan is unchained from a rock, and then, without why or wherefore, like a transformation-scene in a pantomime, the human race changes into a quasi-angelic race.” * . . . “ If we do not fix our notion (to

* Shelley Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 141.

use the common phrase) ‘of what it is all about,’ we shall be hardly able to appreciate its character as a poem and work of art.” *

He then gives us as the “argument:”

“The power of man . . . to turn his earth into an approximate hell; and his power likewise, if he so wills it, by a gradual but energetic change of spirit to turn his earth into an approximate heaven.” *

8. THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS.

We will now attempt to solve the second of the two enigmas we propounded to ourselves before we took a hurried glance at the Prometheus Bound, namely, “how and why does Demogorgon play his part?” which is really a portion of the larger question, “how and why is Prometheus delivered and made perfect?” Let us then trace Prometheus’ history. He is the son of Themis, but not as “law.”

“My mother . . .
Who is called not only Themis but *Earth* too,
Her single beauty joys in many names.”

—(Pr. B., l. 252.)

It is as the “Earth,” the “mother of all living,” that she alone appears in the Prometheus Unbound. He is the son, therefore, of the earth, “without father bred,” so far as we know. He loves men. We gather that if he did not make them, yet he superintended their making. He finds them denied

“The birthright of their being: knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted.”—(Act II, sc. iv, l. 38.)

* Shelley Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 144.

He resolved to help them. Jupiter, the ambitious son of God Saturn (not then ill-disposed to man, we infer, or Prometheus had been grievously lacking in insight and foresight), is given the "dominion of wide heaven" in his father's stead, on condition that "man be free," *i. e.*, get his birthright.

Man is to rise out of a life of mere animalism, measured by the revolutions of the earth (time=Saturn), and to become a sharer in that timeless life of the gods, the life of thought—"for what has thought* to do with time?" But Jupiter—mean he what he may—once master, fails to fulfill his pledge; on the contrary, he changes the negative misery of man into a fearful thralldom.

"Into their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good which levied mutual war."

—(Act II, sc. iv, l. 55.)

The Titan, in his quick sympathy, gave men the hopes—perfumes, as it were, of the "Elysian flowers," Nepenthe, oblivion of ill (as antidote to remorse and despair); Moly, spiritual vision (as antidote to sensuality); and Amaranth, "intimations of immortality" (as antidote to frantic rebellion, since the source of the sweet peace that comes with resignation). Nor did he confine himself to negative blessings. *Love*, to unite men in societies; *fire*, which, as an extension of their bodies, should toil for them; *speech*, making them intellectually one, and giving thought precision; *science*, or rather, that intuitive insight into Nature's deepest secrets which became an occult tradition in myths;

* One must always bear in mind how much "thought" is made to comprise:—passion, imagination, reason, will.

poetry, which, by its sound-harmonies and thought-harmonies, prophecies man's perfection; *music*, to

“Lift up the listening spirit
Until it walked exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound,”

—(Act II, sc. iv, l. 79);

statuary, the ideal of man's glorified body; the art of *healing*, or helping the present marred body to some little part of its healthy glory; *astronomy*, the freedom of the seas, and a larger conception not only of the earth, but of the universe; *commerce*, made possible by shipping, so mastering space; *cities*, associations of men for the production of the loftiest culture.

“Such alleviations of his state Prometheus gave to man.”

—(Id., l. 98.)

In punishment wherefor, he is chained in Caucasus for everlasting torments.

At his feet are two sea nymphs, sometimes asleep in one another's arms, dreaming dreams of his release, which doubtless he feels stealing over him as some silvery mist that creeps up the forested hillsides; at other times, actively comforting him with words of love.* Far away is the bride of his whole being, Asia, glorious elder sister of these sea nymphs, whom now he can communicate with only through “her shadow” (Act II, sc. i, l. 70), Panthea.

When first chained, he uttered a curse—that is to say, a prayer for his enemy's ruin—which can be summarized in two lines: “Heap on thy soul . . . ill deeds; then be thou damned beholding good” Act I, l. 292)—that is to say, *Be* thyself utterly and know thy-

* See Appendix, for a note on the meaning of Ione and Panthea.

self; and "Let the hour come when thou must appear to be That which thou art internally" (Act I, l. 299)—that is to say, *Seem* utterly what thou art. No nobler prayer could be offered up for the good man; but what is heaven to him is hell to the wicked. Hearing his curse, which he had forgotten (not gloating over it, as the Prometheus of Æschylus would), he declared "it doth repent me" (Act I, l. 203); "grief far a while is blind, and so was mine" (l. 204); but he is now "king over" himself (l. 492); he has learned in his agonies "to wish no living thing to suffer pain" (l. 205), and so recalls his curse. Consternation follows. All that love him and depend upon him believe him conquered. He is really conqueror. Jupiter himself declares: "*Gentle* and just and dreadless, is he not the monarch of the world?" (Act III, sc. i, l. 68.) He is the form, "wisdom, courage, and *long-suffering* love" "animate." (l. 135.) He is "firm, not proud" (Act I, l. 237), and *therefore* he recants. He is no nearer to submission; he will not "flatter crime." (l. 401.) But he understands what the actual damnation of Jupiter is. He "can receive no good" (l. 389). Therefore Prometheus has only "pity" for him now. (l. 429.) His tortures at the hand of Jupiter he fully understands. "He but requites me for his own misdeed." (l. 392.) All which torture has only served to perfect him, to substitute for the unquenchable laughter of the gods the diviner "smile" of the "King of Sadness" (Act I, l. 780), with whom, in the words of Byron, all torture is "tributary to his will."*

* An interesting comparison might be instituted between the

Now, no sooner has he vanquished the evil passion for retaliation, than his extreme temptation comes. Can he retain his confidence in the *real* omnipotence of good, in the face of the full display of the *apparent* dominion of evil? The Furies insinuate: Thou gavest men knowledge (Act I, l. 541), and thence have come "hope, love, doubt, and desire," a "thirst of fierce fever." (l. 543.) What is the use of religion and moral reform? Did not the mission of Jesus, of "gentle worth" (l. 545), fail grievously? Is he not now "wailing for the faith he kindled?" (l. 555.) What is the use of political reform? Did not France dedicate herself to truth, freedom, and love? What came of her brave folly? Was she not suffocated in a bath of reeking gore? (l. 571.) What is the use of living and dying for men? Again Jesus illustrates the absurdity of such a course. The cross is what men give to those who live for them, and a worship worse than execration to those who die for them. "Hath not his name become a curse?" (l. 602.) His followers have misunderstood, and only make his gospel of peace and brotherly love an excuse for fanatical hate to all who are really like in mind and heart to him whom they traduce by calling Lord. (l. 606.) In conclusion, nothing is reasonable but utter disbelief in good as a possibility on earth. The right-minded are spell-bound by conventionalism or craven terror—"unable to devise new good." (l. 622.) The kindly "want power" (l. 624), and give mere sentimental sympathy, which amounts to self-pity, because of the

firmness of Prometheus—gentle, pitiful—and the stubborn, heartless, Satanic pride of Manfred. See Appendix.

painfulness of witnessing pain. (*Cf.* l. 410.) The "powerful" want "goodness" (l. 625), for their own eternal selves a far worse lack. The "wise" in devices want "love," to put them into practice. (l. 626.) Those "who love want wisdom," and by their frantic blundering only bring ridicule upon themselves, and more oppression on those they would relieve. Last of all, the "would-be just" are unfeeling and unaware that others feel, so that their justice is indistinguishable from its opposite, selfish violence. "All best things are thus confused to ill." (l. 627.)

But instead of relinquishing his trust in good, as before he pitied the self-despising slaves of Heaven (l. 429);* and for the furies who "exult" in their "deformity" (l. 464), whose "element" is "hate" as his is "pain" (l. 477) he has also pity:

"I weigh not what he do, but what ye suffer
Being evil;" (l. 480.)

so now he merely pities those whom these "snakes" "torture not" (l. 632). The last fury vanishes baffled, and Prometheus perceives that this torment, "though dread revenge" on the part of Jupiter, is not his "victory:"

"This is defeat, fierce king!
The sights with which thou torturest and gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no *types* of things which are."
—(l. 641.)

Then come the "angels," † the good "spirits"

* *Cf.* with false pity of Mercury in preceding line: "I wonder at yet pity thee." Also l. 263 and l. 410.

† *Cf.* After the temptation of Jesus. Mat. iv, 11, and Mk. i, 13. Also Lk. xxii, 43 (though not of certain authority), after the

from the "caves of human thought" (l. 658), intuitions of obscure origin, the self-assertion of divine instincts from the subconscious mind of man, that cause to emerge in consciousness "such truths" of which "each to itself must be the oracle" (Act II, sc. iv, l. 123) self-witnessing truths, of unique certainty, though only isolated facts can substantiate as yet their witness, and to which any appeal for proof were idle. Enlightenment, self-sacrifice, philosophico-political idealism, art power ("fashioning forms more *real* than living man." Act. I, l. 738), love, hope—these by turns separately manifest in a few, speak eloquently of their joint possession by all in times to come. And their chorus sing a pæan to the "soul of man:"

"Wisdom, justice, love, and peace,
When they *struggle* to *increase*
Are to us . . . the prophecy
Which begins and ends in *Thee*." (l. 805.)

Then Prometheus, comforted, sees clearly, what he has glimpsed before again and again, that "most vain" is "all hope but love" (l. 87).

9. ELEMENTS OF SALVATION.

Prometheus from this point on has nothing to do. The second act is Asia's; the third is Demogorgon's and the Spirit of the Hour's; in the fourth—which is, strictly speaking, no act, but a chant in his honor—he does not even appear. But this inactivity or even absence from the poetic stage is because really he has done his part, and that he himself, in a sense, is the

temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane. So the Lord, or rather the angel of the Lord, appears to Job. (Job xl, 6.)

stage on which all that others do is transacted. Let us now state categorically what, according to the poem is requisite for the liberation and perfection of the soul of man.

(1) He must overcome that vindictive passion mis-called the desire for just retribution. He must learn that two wrongs do not, and can not make a right; that violence only breeds violence; and that it is not a triumph over the evil one if we become infected with just what we despise in him, *i. e.*, if we let his conduct toward us serve as a criterion, to any extent, for our conduct toward him. We have Shelley's views in plain prose* upon this matter: "Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonored by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love."† In short, Prometheus must extirpate the evil in him which the evil without has engendered or fostered. This he has done. He has overcome.

* In his preface to the *Cenci*, speaking of Beatrice: "Certainly an extreme application of the doctrine of non-resistance."

† "Resist not Him that is evil," etc. (Mat. v, 39), but "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii, 21). "Love your enemies" (Mat. v, 44). "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye!" (I Pet. iii, 14, and Mat. v, 10). St. Paul assumes that this doctrine is, as a matter of fact, put in practice by the Corinthian Christians: "Ye bear with the foolish gladly, being wise yourselves. For ye bear with a man, if he bringeth you into bondage, if he devoureth you, if he taketh you captive, or he exalteth himself, if he smiteth you on the face." (II Co. xi, 19, 20). "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," prayed Jesus (Lk. xxiii, 34), and St. Stephen cried, when being stoned, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii, 60). "When he suf-

(2) Asia, man's ideal of nature, must seek for him from inscrutable Eternity the solution of the enigmas of life and doom. He must learn that he "who reigns" is not "God." God never "reigns" (i. e: compels the natures of men and things to *his* private will which has in view his own particular good). God is spirit, and "pleads," "serves," "loves" (i. e: is in each *that* will which seeks particular perfection with and in the perfection of all that are). (Act II, sc. iv.) He needs to *know* that, as a matter of fact, not only for himself in his subjective experience, but also in the universe at large for one who knows it through and through:

"All things are subject but eternal Love."

—(Act II, sc. iv, l. 120.)

(3) He needs an external power—since he will not, by being that power, fall from ideal self-control, or rather self-oblivion—an incarnation* of the eternal energy to dethrone objective evil; to dissolve those gods, laws and institutions which were good, but are stages of good left behind, and therefore evil now. For, be it well remembered, not in folly, but in wise prevision was the empire of Jupiter founded on "eldest faith" (tradition) and "hell's coeval fear" (self-love) (Act III, sc. i, l. 10) by Prometheus himself who "gave" him "wisdom, which is strength" (Act II, sc. iv, l. 44), on condition "that man be free;" which he puts elsewhere more personally, identifying his own will's freedom with that of man:

ferred, he threatened not, etc., but committed his cause to Him who judgeth righteously" (I Pet. ii, 23), for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (Jas. i, 20).

* Act III, sc. i, l. 46, "Waiting the incarnation which ascends . . . from Demogorgon's throne." (l. 20-24, Id.)

"O'er all things, but thyself, I gave thee power,
And *my* own will."— (Act I, l. 273.)

(4) He needs Hercules to break the fetters of evil custom from his body. He is cured within, but his "members" war against the "law of his mind." * They refuse obedience. In other words, "might" (Hercules) in the service of "wrong" has made it pass for "right;" while "right" without "might," though he knows himself for what he is, and all the "right minded" know him intuitively and love him, yet remains a victim.

Most glorious of spirits, thus doth *strength*
To wisdom, courage, and long suffering love,
And thee who art the form *they* animate,
Minister like a slave." — (Act III, sc. iii, l. 1.)

(5) He needs, once freed from shackles of violent unreason, to be united again with "nature;" no more an ideal, dwelling apart, communed with only by proxy through Panthea, but a realized vital ideal; *that* world which would correspond to the perfect man's "need of a world"—no more a matter of vague intimations, but of positive experience.

(6) The shell, the "boon" of Proteus, the God of beautiful sea changes, to Asia, on the occasion of her nuptials with Prometheus (Act III, sc. iii, l. 64); the "Shell of Ocean" (l. 74), of that liberty which is a condition of true virtue, must be blown, and its note of prophecy must bring about its own fulfillment; not suddenly, to be sure, for though at its blast the "spirit of the earth," the optimistic child with intuitive mind declares "all things have put their evil nature off" (Act III, sc. iv, l. 77), yet the "spirit of

* Rom. vii, 14-25.

the hour" with mature out-looking powers, willing to believe, but unable to say he *knows* until he has obtained evidence, (accepting the fruits as likely because of the tree, but insisting that the tree shall vindicate his confidence in it by bearing fruits) is "at first disappointed not to *see* such mighty change" (as *he had felt within*) "expressed in outward things." (Act III, sc. iv, l. 128.)

(7) Last of all, Prometheus must live with Asia, not in his "cave," to which he invited her (Act III, sc. iii, l. 6-69), one of mere contemplation, and developing from within beautiful fictions (l. 34), exercising the "inward eye," and the outer eye only on what they have together "uttered;"* but in the "cavern" of mother earth (l. 124-175) near which stood the temple to Jove (l. 127), and still stands that to Prometheus (l. 160), where was worshiped the fire, emblem of man's quick spirit; the "cavern" of science, where the outer eye shall scan all nature (inclusive of man), and discern in it realized all those ideals which in his own "cave" he would have drawn from within, but never have felt as *being* in virtue of their own excellence, since they would seem to have been—not recognized, but created by himself.†

* In the sense of "outered."

† It is of course quite arguable that Shelley did not make any such distinction between these two caves. But such a contention is an ungrateful one, as it would leave Shelley responsible then for an inexcusable piece of slovenly, senseless duplication. I believe Shelley was too much of an artist to beget twins fortuitously, Mr. James Thomson notwithstanding.

JUPITER.

Now at length we are in a position to answer the question, "What is Jupiter?" He is that evil from which man needs salvation, whatever that evil be. And considering what has been said, the reader will see how entirely proper is Mr. Rossetti's interpretation of him as the "anthropomorphic God,"* the "Setebos" of Caliban's making, according to Robert Browning, in spite of Prof. Scudder's objection to a "theological" interpretation. "As long as the human mind is dominated by the idea of an anthropomorphic God, it misconstrues all phenomena of the world, and finds oppression and wrong where it ought rather to find necessity or inscrutable vicissitude; as long as the human mind is rancorous and revengeful, it initiates and prolongs a series of iniquities—woe and crime, and continuing to evolve out of woe and crime in an infinite procession of catastrophe. This is Prometheus chained by Jupiter."† In brief, because he imagines his God to be "even such an one as himself," he applies and must apply to him some "science of theometry" (to use the poet Rossetti's happy term). The result is a big, bold, bad man, to whom submission is self-degradation; from whom revolt is duty; but so long as he is wrongly considered God, also an impossible atheism. It is easy, however, to agree with Prof. Scudder that Mr. Rossetti's interpretation needs supplementing. According to Shelley's line, "All

* "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."—Ps. 1, 21.

† Shelley Society Papers, Vol. I, p. 139.

those foul shapes . . . which *were* Jupiter" (Act III, sc. iv, l. 180), one has a right to speak of him in the plural, particularly as he was given "no power over himself" (Act I, l. 273), and presumably lacked the unifying principle of organic life. His "all-prolific" (Act I, l. 213) paternity of evils needs not depend upon any populous harem of goddesses—though his child, Demogorgon, have Thetis for mother—but upon the far simpler principle obtaining in the lowest orders of animal life, namely, mere partition.

"Jupiter stands for all those institutions, civil and religious, which were once the true expression of the will of man, but which, as the centuries have passed, became effete forms, still powerful to bind and with an innate tendency to repress."* Still, even now, we can not feel satisfied that we have exhausted the being of Jupiter. A wrong conception of God, producing disastrous results in perverse worship and base morals; institutions, civil and religious, expressive of some "überwundener Standpunct," and now calculated to retard progress—nay, crush the very life of society; to these let us add the conception of morals which derive their authority from something alien to, maybe hostile to, the soul itself; that require unreasoning obedience, under threat of all sorts of possible and impossible penalties to be visited upon the obdurate. But if Jupiter is thus threefold, what is the one common trait that, though it makes the three not organically one, yet serves them in lieu of chemical affinity? It is violence. How, then, came the soul of

* Introduction to Prof. Vida Scudder's edition of *Prometheus Unbound*, p. 34. Cf. Shelley's prefaces, on institutions.

man to summon Jupiter, a violent Jupiter, "who reigns," to the "dominion of wide heaven?"

Man, in the face of nature, her powers misunderstood and therefore unmastered by him, needed something to give him confidence. She seemed so utterly different from him, insensitive and apparently unconscious. It was a satisfaction to feel that one like himself, sensitive and conscious, ruled nature, with whom, consequently, he could know how to deal. A God like himself could be propitiated if hostile, flattered by constant adulation into something like constant solicitude for him; and, if he failed in his efforts, it was not baffling to his intelligence, for in dealing with a God like himself he must expect caprices, perversities, selfishness, greed, ingratitude.

Men needed also an order that should simulate union. If they were not sufficiently of one mind and heart to be spiritually an organism, they could be forced into such a mechanical arrangement, as would greatly enhance their safety and happiness, by just that limitation of the greed of each, which would allow something to the appetite of all. Hence, government was inaugurated; paternity became chieftancy; chieftancy, kinship; kinship, empire; with aspirations after universality.

Men needed, further, in order to regulate their behavior toward one another, certain formulations of moral principle, which could be readily applied to individual cases. Since the conscience of all was weak, the conscience of the expert few must utter itself; and these utterances be made an "external" standard, unalterable by any private whim or passion. But just here lies their danger: they come to be looked upon

as so unalterable, that not only do we resist their being tampered with, by way of diminution, retrogression; we will not even let them increase, progress. So they become the bulwark of those who lag in the rear, the deserters of the advancing cause of humanity, from behind which they shoot cowardly arrows to wound the brave Achilles in the heel. Such would be a statement of the good Jupiter was intended to furnish; these three evils (once good) which are one in virtue of their common method of dealing with individual men, namely, compulsory violence more or less hid behind a mask of self-respecting dignity.

To be sure, "government" has done—is, doubtless, still doing its work. Despotism of the direst sort having been itself—historians admit—the only way by which national unity became possible, which, in its turn, has yet to bring about the dream of political solidarity for the race.

To be sure, an "anthropomorphic" God has done and is doubtless still doing for many his work—eliciting confidence face to face with an unknown universe in the savage or semi-savage man.

To be sure, "moral codes," with their ready-made measures of conduct, have still their work to do for many of us, though long ago repudiated by the acknowledged One Master of Christendom.*

Jupiter is yet on his throne for some; for others he is fallen; for most, we trust he is falling, "like lightning from heaven,"† where he never had any rightful place. But, how stands it with Jupiter for us, for whom he is falling? The traditional God appears

* Cf. Gal. iii, 24, 25.

† Luke, x, 18.

to us, if we use our reason, "unjust," by any known standard of justice; he is less moral than we—(to say he is so much more moral that he appears immoral, is, of course, a silly subterfuge); and, therefore, to worship him is, if we realize his injustice, to degrade our soul—to prostrate ourselves before might as right.

External moral codes are altogether too acceptable to insincere people. They purchase immunities by cheap conformity. Disloyal in spirit, they are punctilious observers of the letter. Furthermore, even with the sincere, they hinder progressive moralization. They are changeless, and must be, if they are to compel; yet, if changeless, they will soon express only a part of what the soul of man knows of good, and that part very poorly. And then, too, these moral codes were devised so as to emphasize those evil deeds which cause greatest evident disturbance of the social equilibrium; so that, as a matter of fact, we come to think little of those evils the codes do not mention. Because we have become used to listening to a voice without for moral instruction, and are not skilled in listening to any further revelations from within, we consider such as of slight importance. We value little all that our moral growth has added to our moral body, because, forsooth, moral clothes, made centuries ago, took no note of what did not then exist! We are so absorbed in contemplating these clothes that we insist they still fit, and that if they feel uncomfortable, it is *surplus flesh* only that we have gained! And, last of all and worst of all, the end is utterly forgotten in the means; righteousness of conduct is aimed at, not holiness of character; and, therefore, little of either is obtained.

That government has become the instrument of the strong and prosperous, insisting on the preservation of *disorders* on the score of their being legal, and therefore partaking of the nature of order, is, we suppose, denied by none who is not among the strong and prosperous for whose advantage the machinery is kept oiled and moving. Men are surely, as a rule, too selfish to undertake governing mankind for the mere advantage of that anarchical race. It is even nowadays sometimes whispered among us that public servants, who look upon office as a public trust for private advantage, are here and there to be met with in our own country! This point must not, then, detain us any longer.

We see clearly from what the soul of man, according to *our* Shelley, needs to be delivered.

10. DEMOGORGON.

Now, let us ask ourselves the last and most momentous critical question—what is Demogorgon? We can only judge of his nature from his (1) office; (2) his origin; and (3) his way of fulfilling that office; since positive description of him, there is none in the entire poem. The office he takes upon himself is that of external auxiliary to the “Savior and the strength of suffering man.” (Act I, l. 825.) When the soul has become God’s, God must reveal Himself to man as the destroyer of evil. If the wrath of man did not—because it could not—work the righteousness of God,* and the wrath of man was overcome by love, then that overcoming God, who is love to holiness, must reveal himself as wrath † to the evil *as evil*, over-

* Jas. i, 20.

† Rom. i, 18; Col. iii, 6; Eph. v, 6.

ruling it for "good to them that love" him.* Here lies the very difference between the New Testament theosophy and that of Shelley. In the New Testament, Prometheus and Demogorgon are one. But we are concerned now not with the New Testament, or with the reconciliation of Shelley's views on this point with those of the early Christian writers, but with Shelley's Demogorgon. What has been said here, is only to suggest the comparison. Undoubtedly, Shelley looked forward to the ideal condition of man as one of anarchy, of unmorality, and atheism, though each word as here used must be carefully qualified. As Prof. T. H. Green taught us all in his second lay sermon: "A passionate atheism is often a religion which misunderstands itself. . . . It can not recognize its 'God' under the old name."† Surely none is prepared to look to morality in the sense of constant choices between good and evil, always exercised painfully in favor of the former, as the ultimate ideal of human perfection. We hope for a time, ourselves, when these choices will cease to be painful; when they will be so well established as to constitute a habit, and therefore lapse from consciousness; that is to say, a time when there will be no choice at all. "For the very existence of divided natures is a conflict,"‡ and we look for peace at the last. Surely because morality should cease to be what we understand as morality, there would be no loss, only leisure for higher things than "morality" if such there be. We are most ourselves when least

* Ro. viii, 28. "† The Witness of God and Faith," p. 91.

‡ Walter Bagehot's Literary Studies, Vol. I, p. 77.

self-conscious ; when self-consciousness is only a meta-physical means to an end :—the consciousness of all that is good, beautiful, and true—of God. The will, as distinct in popular use from “impulse” and “desire,” is simply an “impulse” or a “desire” that has to fight its way against others bitterly hostile.* When such foes to the noblest “impulses” and “desires” cease, we shall be no longer aware of “will” in the vulgar sense, hardly of “personality,” if you please, in the same sense. We shall have become “super-personal,” “impersonal” if you prefer, but at all events nobler than we are, and blissfully more efficient realizers of the divine possibles of man, even though some would-be logical fiend should cynically hint that we were “degenerates,” and had lapsed from the exalted pinnacle where we boasted of a “distinct consciousness of personality.”†

In brief, Shelley looks forward to the time when we shall be utterly *unprincipled*; when we shall *have* no principles, because our principles will meet with

* It surely can not be incorrect to justify the idealist poet par excellence by an idealist philosopher. Mr. Green, in Book II of his *Prolegomena*, furnishes the student of Shelley with something like a cue to his nature. Whether Mr. Green’s psychology is true of us all, is one question, and whether it describes Shelley—possibly a morbid exception—is another. It is only as describing Shelley’s “constitution” that we refer to the ideas of Mr. Green.

† Walter Bagehot fully recognized that this “impulsive unity” is a “quality of the highest character ;” “it would be impiety to doubt it” (p. 77). The tone of his essay seems, however, to deplore the “lack of personality” (p. 100) incident to such a character. He also, it would seem, completely forgets that Prometheus is only a being of such “simplicity,” because he *has* for centuries struggled, suffered, and overcome in his supreme temptation—the furies that *were* in *him* till they vanished.

no resistance; never come into distinct consciousness as such, but appear only as inexplicable unique impulses of our being, moving us "altogether," if we "move at all," like Wordsworth's cloud; classing us properly with those blessed described in the second stanza of Wordsworth's marvelous Ode to Duty: "Who do God's work and know it not" as His, because they have been able to say to Him with Jesus "all things that are mine are thine" and therefore "all thine are mine" (John, xvii, 10), for "I and the Father are One." (John, x, 30.) Of course, to consider at any length the word "anarchy," after its two greater fellows, were foolish enough. "Granting" the state just described to be attained or approximated, what would be the use of "government" or corporate compulsion of individuals to socially profitable conduct? Socialism, in our idealistic flight, has been left behind as a clumsy thing,—the hope of compelling by selfish considerations, enforced from without, a good conduct,—when we are contemplating the possibility of a far nobler conduct being produced with spontaneous beauty and joyous ease from within!

Whatever we think of it ourselves, into the sphere of this sort of atheism, immorality and anarchy, Promethens, the racial soul of man, now, after his absolute conquest of evil desires, is to be ushered by Demogorgon's aid. To be sure, what are actually processes, stretching over vast periods, are in the poem foreshortened. The principle is asserted—development of latent possibilities within; its goal is depicted, namely:—that state at present only negatively indicable as "atheism, *un*morality and anarchy;" and religiously felt as a finding of God, holiness and mutual beatitude

in that Self, at which Wordsworth hints when he declares "we feel that we are greater than we know,"* and in which, according to Shelley, as already quoted, there is no "me and thee," but only "One" manifold, in which alone we intensely live, in whom

"It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be."

—(Act III, sc. iv, l. 125.) †

Let us, however, draw no conclusion as to what Demogorgon must be in order to fulfill his office, before we have considered his origin. As fulfilling this office, he is child of Jupiter and Thetis. To call him the "spirit of revolution" with Prof. Scudder is well enough.‡ But would mere undefined revolution accomplish what is expected of Demogorgon? Is not the "weakness of the intellect," which she professes to discover in the poem as a whole, due to the fact that she has not realized the full "*strength* of the spirit" which she rightly discerns in it? Let us hazard a bit of speculation. Suppose Thetis—in virtue of her origin in the ocean (the one domain where still a Titan rules, according to Æschylus; where Jupiter had not asserted any direct sway)—signifies "liberty," "natural impulse," "free vital development." Then how would we be able to describe Demogorgon—the child or compromise between "irresponsible external control" in religion, morals, and politics, and this absolute "spontaneity" or "anarchy" which at present is not self-satisfied, "hungering for calm" (Act III, sc. ii, l. 132)?

* "Afterthought" to the River Duddon, a series of sonnets.

† See Appendix, for a note suggesting a comparison of Coleridge's theosophy and Shelley's.

‡ Introduction to edition of Prometheus Unbound, p. 40.

Jupiter imagines that this compromise will greatly help him; thus, through Thetis and her issue, becoming master also of the free deep. He expects Demogorgon to "trample out the spark" (Act III, sc. ii, l. 24), "the soul of man" (l. 5), that remains yet unsubdued. How could he so delude himself? Is it not that "a secret . . . fear . . . perplexes the Supreme" (Act I, l. 274)? But this compromise, "this fatal child," whom Jupiter confesses "mightier" than himself (l. 43), is none other than than—what?

In politics:—the people forcing one another to socially advantageous conduct (neither extraneous compulsion, nor impulsive freedom) "democratic," or if you please, "socialistic institutions;" in morals:—self-control in accord with the law of our being (neither extraneous compulsion nor impulsive freedom)—"duty" as celebrated by Wordsworth; in theology:—the conception of God as imminent, where alone knowable, in the soul, and the worship, therefore, not of a God outside of us (nor the absence of all worship), but of God as the true self in us. The last state, which it is to bring about, would be, so far as it admits of indication at all, the recognition and worship of *our* self in Him, (who is Self of all others also), in order to which worship we should have, by complete sympathy with all others, to feel and rejoice in Him as their self and ours, all being "perfected into One." (J. xvii, 23.)

Now, it seems to the writer that this conception of Demogorgon as the compromise between "extraneous compulsion" and "impulsive freedom" in politics, morals, and theology, would be adequate to just the office assigned to him. If ever the ideal state is to be

reached, it will be by such a preliminary compromise stepping in and dethroning the violent God, and, having accomplished his task, which is simply to dethrone him, descending with him into oblivion, returning into the unmanifest eternal source of energy. So does in the poem Demogorgon behave :

“The tyranny of heaven none may retain
Or reassume or hold succeeding thee.”

—(Act III, sc. i, l. 57.)

Not himself will hold it, even in trust for another. The active incarnation of Demogorgon, as child of Jupiter and Thetis ceases, and he is again that impenetrable Gloom, living, omniscient, solicitous for the safety, bliss and perfection of man, who speaks the tremendous self-denying words of the close, in which we are given the secret of salvation, as lying in nothing that he did, in particular, as incarnate, in nothing that Asia did, seeking the secret or “learning meekness” (Act II, sc. iii, l. 94); but simply in the attitude which Prometheus took—all the rest being so to say eternally foreordained upon the supervention of that attitude of soul in Prometheus, and sure to occur again as often as that attitude is reassumed should it ever be lost.* There remains for us now only to remark that of course the “darkness” descriptive of the “Primal Power,” as Mrs. Shelley calls him, “the ultimate ground of divine existence,” as Dr. Garnett designates him, should be taken to mean “excessive light” “exceeding our organs,” and therefore to us a *quick* “Gloom.” At Prof. Scudder’s serious complaint

* See Appendix, for a note on the significance of the “snake” or “serpent.”

that Shelley has for "regenerated humanity" "no message" we may well afford to chuckle amiably. We have not yet come to that point where we need very urgently a gospel of that sort. We venture to suggest that furthermore "the idea of progressive development unknown to the men of the revolution" will not make at all intelligible the life of the "regenerate." Necessarily that "society" will be "invertebrate" in any and every forecast. The ideal of it, though operative, is only in process of self-definition. Development is surely for attainment's sake; so that the ultimate is after all "a stagnant empty enjoyment," if one chooses so to misname it. While there is development attainment is incomplete.

I am not at all sure that had Shelley possessed all our science he could have made himself clearer.* Can we say any thing more of life and death, and of man's conquest of nature and self than he?

"Death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave even as a mother,
Folding her child, says "leave me not again!"

—(Act III, sc. iii, l. 105.)

"To bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave across the night of life."

—(l. 171.)

"The abyss shouts from her depths laid bare;
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none."

—(Act IV, l. 42.)

"Man, Oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not." —(l. 395.)

"Man . . . not yet exempt, though *ruling* them like slaves
From chance, and death, and mutability."

—(Act III, sc. iv, l. 200.)

* Cf. Shelley's view of nature contrasted with Darwin's, Mathilde Blind in Shelley's Society Papers, Vol. I.

“Our singing shall build
In the void’s loose field
A world for the spirit of wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.”
—(Act IV, l. 153.)

12. AN IMPERISHABLE POEM.

In looking back over the pages of this manuscript, it seems to me whatever usefulness such an interpretation may have will greatly suffer if it be supposed that the author imagines it gifted with any final authority. It is merely a statement of what the poem means to him at his present stage of mental development. Surely, just as Goethe claimed that the conclusion of his *Faust* would have to be written afresh in every age, so this glorious poem will need re-interpretation. It is no small portion of its merit that so far it has been able to admit of all such needed re-interpretation, and that it bids fair to do so for all time to come. So elastic are its conceptions, so indefinable its pivotal terms. The seer has become the organ of “the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come,” and his words are chosen with an unconscious reference to meanings that are like unrisen stars affecting already his planetary sphere, though not seen nor named; they had for him a sense, they have for us a sense, they will have a sense for those as yet unborn. Each sense is a legitimate and honest interpretation; in fact, the only one possible to a living *enjoyer* of the poem, though, doubtless, the fossil-lover, with his critical pick and impertinent lens, may, if he be very diligent and suffi-

ciently unpoetic, glory in the "exact meanings" which the words had (he thinks) for Shelley as mere disciple of Godwin; but for all his success, we fear his learning may make him if not wholly mad, yet at all events very blind, very dogmatic, and to the work of Shelley very destructive. For it is now clear that only what has within the power of re-adaptation to an evershifting environment can continue to live. Things are stable only through constant regular change.

The truth of to-day, if limited to what it is to-day, is the lie of to-morrow, though the truth of to-morrow be the legitimate child of the truth of to-day, be, indeed (if we disregard the unwarranted limitation), the *same*, in the only sense that any thing remains the same. Creeds have lived only in so far as they were suggestions in the disguise of definitions; where they were precise, unalterable, strong (as men said), there they perished. New thoughts, insensibly, particle by particle, replaced the old, and few were aware of the vital process of renewal; few now know or realize how strange would sound to our ears the English of old Shakespeare; fewer still now know or realize how strange would seem to our minds the actual conceptions of many dogmatists whose *words* we quote with zest, and whose *spirit* we rightly commend, because it begat the spirit that uses their old *words* in a better sense than theirs.

As a willow standing in alluvial soil puts forth new roots to suck the fatness of successive layers of rich deposit and pushes upward yearly in new youth, so the old ideas procure for themselves strong nutriment from each generation of thinkers, and live al-

ways by those that are above. Old roots have been abandoned as the layers they threaded became barren. Not so the sturdy, stubborn oak. Its tough, dogmatic fiber does not help it to survive. The new deposits cover its old roots (should the river of life bring the thoughts of successive generations under its shadow), and it is only a matter of a year or two—a generation or so of thinkers—and the tree dies at the top; then, when all the living leaves are lost, it rots, and makes room for other trees—that spring from its acorns, but which, like it, are doomed to die, because, true to their parent, they insist on changeless individuality.

To me, the Prometheus of Shelley is an inspired poem. Carefully has the seer limited himself to what he saw. He was not presumptuous enough to invent or outline prematurely “a gospel for the redeemed!” He spoke of redemption only in its essential features. The “times and seasons” he knew not, nor pretended to know. The finality of the redemption as a fact he doubted, though the principle thereof he trusted. It could, in case of need, be applied again and again. Below each depth is another depth; above each height, a further height; and in Shelley’s poem nothing is rigid, determinate; therefore, nothing grows old in it, nothing dies. It will speak to the future of “the last things” as eloquently as to us, though to them Demogorgon—the expressly undefined and undefinable—yet for every man always quite definite engine for the overthrow of regnant evil, will mean what we perhaps have in our wildest hours of prophetic forecast never imagined. So the poem will live, and the poet will be loved, and wherever “he doth *bear his* part, while the one spirit’s plastic stress sweeps through

the dull, dense world," he will rejoice to know that the work he accomplished in those brief thirty years of spiritual battle was to serve untold generations—lift them into planes of ideal freedom ; give them faith in the Good that reveals himself as Beauty ; make them look for all things to no external source, but to the divine fount of humanity within.

V. THE PERMANENCE OF ART.

"In love with things"—that is what our poets are not enough, for they are, Mr. John Burroughs thinks, too entirely "in love with poetry."* We applaud the dictum of our quoted critic, if he means that a poet should have, in the first place, something to say, and make his *verse-form* his second concern only. But that a true poet must—speaking with a strict attention to the meaning of words—be more in love with things than with *poetry* we refuse to believe. Would he ever go to the trouble of writing, were he primarily concerned with things? As artisan, perhaps, but surely not as artist. For he would, were he consistent, spend his allotted life in ogling, caressing, arranging, and rearranging *things*; he would labor early and late to acquire and control them. For he would be, in plain terms, "a lover of things," and never a "poet" except in the sense that Gray supposes to be a possible one, when he whispers pathetically of "mute inglorious Miltons,"—in our opinion quite impossible freaks of nature.

For why, we ask ourselves bluntly, should this fortunate youth, endowed with a supreme passion for things, busy himself with what he loves so much less, with poetry, that most wily and exacting siren of all the

* A reference to an article on Art for Art's Sake, which appeared in "The Dial" about the time the reflections which make up this essay were thrown into literary form.

arts? The only explanation of such a man's deliberate turning into a book-maker of the conscientious sort—*i. e.*, not for lucre—would be the appearance all of a sudden of an unreasonable missionary zeal. Unreasonable, we repeat, because no one, surely, will claim that "things," being unconscious, and manifesting no courteous delight in human flattery, will be benefited by the preaching of such an ardent zealot. Missionary spirit of this quality or brand, is admirable, but it argues fatally against the whole-hearted fondness for *things* which we assumed to exist in our gifted youth. Only because he loved men as much as his well-beloved "things," would he feel compelled to make them aware of the entire loveliness of "things." Nothing but a hunger and thirst for human sympathy and appreciation, superior to his appetite for things, could, we believe, move such a man to write a line of true poetry. But this is against our hypothesis, invalidates totally our assumption, and obliges us to save the position of Walt Whitman's gallant champion by interpreting his words afresh, by putting a loose construction upon them, strict constructionists though we are inclined to be. In entire accord with another writer in "The Dial," we will assert that a true poet loves what he has to say, and loves also to be heard, and therefore weds the thought or sentiment to the most insinuating and permanently effective form he can construct. We might further say that at the bottom this is just what Mr. John Burroughs meant. Weary of volumes produced by idle tinkerers of rhyme, who count feet on their literary fingers, when they would do better to cobble at literal shoes, he gave impatiently an over-emphatic expression to

his idea. Like Macaulay, he succumbed to an innate love of rhetoric—and did not of course expect to be understood to mean exactly what he said. Alas, who does?

But grant for a moment that a poet ought to be in love with things—and this we gladly do—a question suggests itself, an exegetic question of very great importance. In love with things as they are, or rather, as they are presented to our daily observation? Or, shall it be, in love with things as we believe they have it in them to become; with things according to their apparent possibilities rather than their often damaged actuality, or arrested development? The first answer is the source of realism, the second that of idealism in art.

It is quite impossible for any one who considers with some seriousness the matter of the permanency, by perpetuation from age to age, of the noble arts, who desires to make a sober inquiry into it, permanently to postpone a settlement in his mind of this vital issue—realism or idealism? Absolute realism is an absurd theory which no great artist has ever carried into his work-shop. The theory is compelled to make concession after concession to its vigorous, indefatigable opponent. The mere practical exigencies of picture, statue, sonata, or poem, forbid an implicit obedience to those maxims logically deducible from such a radical proposition. Absolute realism would require that no alteration be made in the data of nature; that no right of selection, resolution and recombination of parts, be claimed by the artist; that filth of gutters and blues of heaven be equally interesting and delectable; that no extraneous at-

tractions be imported into the object selected at random for copy; that the artist, without any impertinent notions of beauty and ugliness, transcribe unaltered, unshaded, unemphasized, what he sees, injecting into his work nothing of his own intellectual and moral self, no suggestion of a personal message to men, not the faintest impress of his presence and preference. In fact, absolute realism is a theory which demands of the artist that he be a machine, and his work a transparent window through which a man may look upon the objective world that surrounds him. Indeed the artist would have to be a machine undisturbed by any natural conditions whatsoever, always and in all places equally able and willing to observe and reproduce. The photographic camera is far too human to be the ideal practitioner. It has an unwarranted prejudice for light. Vague profundities of twilight awe and midnight horror—these the sensitive plate refuses to report. The eye can give more than the camera, but unfortunately behind the eye is lodged a living sensitive soul—a medium whose refracting power is never absolutely calculable. For after all, the eye most scientifically trained has its theory to prove, puts its construction upon things, sees only what attracts it, and has a history which determines its method of observation, and the nature of what attracts and fails to attract.

Indeed the very constitution of the eye is a mute reproof to realism. All things are seen according to the eye's structure and not primarily according to the structure of things. There is a horizon. Things appear to us grouped according to our own position. So it is with the soul. And every artist will have to

reckon sooner or later—the sooner the better for himself and his work—with the soul in its totality. And, by the way, be it said here that the artist who consults the soul's demand for beauty can not afford to neglect its demand for goodness. All realism is an exaggerated attempt to satisfy the soul's demand for truth. Let us remember that man is a unit no matter how much we may dissect him in our text-books of psychology, theology, rhetoric, or anatomy. There is one soul with many faculties. If satisfied as to truth, but morally offended, the hurt will counteract the delight. Let the artist theorize as he will, he can never declare himself independent of the ultimate moral ideals, much less of contemporary feelings as to what is repulsive, foul, and villainous. Baudelaire in his terrific poem "La Charogne" is at bottom no realist. It is not in such illumination, with such ironic surroundings that, as a rule, an abandoned carcass is seen. The most obstinate realist would find that only those of his works which happened to give some favorable aspect of nature, some shocking or lovely combination, allowing of a definite, rational, or emotional construction, would attract and hold the attention of his public. The public always was and will be idealistic. It has enough to do with dust and squalor. It loves tinsel—any thing that will rescue it from the weariness of the commonplace. Fidelity to crude fact is the last thing it appreciates. It may admire and praise the skill of the literal copyist, but it will soon turn away bored or angered from his work. In words you may assert that all things in nature are equally beautiful. When it comes to practice, it is soon found that all things will not equally

endure artistic reproduction. But a theory that offers no infallible guidance to practice, that leaves so much to instinct, luck, or a common sense deliberately hostile to it, is of little real use. What then of realism?

It is not so much a theory as a reactionist cry. It is a plea, as we said above, for truth. But as truth is not all that the soul wants, realism is quite impotent or rather inadequate to rule when the reins of government are put in its hands. Now, what is idealism?

To give, in fancy, free scope to the powers of nature, to hasten the process of their evolution, to bring it in idea to its apparently rational conclusion, its craved completion and perfection; this, we should say, is to idealize. Idealistic art portrays that final state or some visibly advancing stage in the process of its attainment. Often in nature we find isolated instances of realistically reproducible landscapes, faces, and color-groupings. These serve as educative hints. The artist understands that these isolated instances are what will bring a panic of joy to the hearts of men. A radiant sunset, a vast expanse of nacreous waters, a spread of marsh netted with reflected blue or gold, a plain of mingling fields and woods, a burst of icy peaks from among forested foothills, a ravine loud with the rapturous tumult of torrents, the upheaval of cloud-continent threatening to bury our awe-struck world, a child in careless merriment, a woman, the perfection of all things seen! These and a thousand other isolated instances present themselves again and again in the history of mankind. A hunger is whetted beyond patient endurance. More! is

the cry, more! and the philosopher tells us, as best he can, why it is we feel the hunger, and what it is in these things that appeases it. The artist catches glimpses with his soul's eye of "the light that never was on sea or land," made imaginable, however, by his experience of stars and moon and sun; and with symbols—visible forms, colors, musical tones, and words—he essays to impart his vision—symbols which, while they present not the things themselves, but only a sense-suggestion of them, give us, who are at bottom most in love with things, a moment's delirious illusion of seeing, hearing, having, and handling *things*. To the extent implied in this requisite illusion must the artist be a realist. He must be plausible.

But the subject of our main inquiry is, whether we can reasonably ascribe perpetuity to art on the assumption of continuous and accelerated human development? We take for granted that there is truth, though not yet fully apprehended. Such an act of faith precedes all scientific research and all philosophic speculation. We take for granted that centuries of equalizing culture will bring men more and more to the acceptance of one view of things, one philosophy, one truth. We assume that man will get more and more a mastery over the lower nature which fosters diversity of opinion for sheer diversity's sake; that harmony, not disharmony, cosmos, not chaos, is the goal of present movement—in one word: progress.

Fully aware of the impossibility of prophesying truly without a sure grasp on some eternal principle and an absolute acquaintance with things as they now are, no one claims greater value for his prog-

nostications than that which belongs to a well-meaning piece of fallible speculation. I am sufficiently unbiased to acknowledge myself doubtless equipped with unconscious biases enough to fit out with them a whole host of scientists and scholars in battle array, though, alas! their science and scholarship are forever—so far as I am concerned—beyond the attainment even of my knights of day-dream adventure. If we take up in turn all the main thinkable hypotheses, in regard to the universe, and ascertain what relation to each one of these is borne by the problem of perpetuity for art, we shall have resolved, if our thinking has been correct, this vexatious problem into another, still more vexatious, namely, which of these philosophic attitudes will triumph? And here we propose to leave the matter, because, doubtless, we are not prepared to offer a solution to the second problem with which we can all be expected to agree. We shall in thus proceeding do no more than the scientists of all time. Asked to solve a riddle, they propound another more difficult as a solution. And if the lively exercise of man's highest faculties in order to their greatest development be the purpose of human life, are we not glad that the Sphinx of earthly wisdom is a sophist and a deceiver? First of all, let us assume the truth of positivism; that is to say, we are to take for granted that the proper attitude of the philosophic mind is that of hostility to philosophy, denying any ultimate human explanation, waiving all theory, and contenting itself with the mere accumulation of facts, data of experience. To be sure, a classification for convenience will be made, and the notes of each class will be

stated—but the classification must be always regarded as only for convenience, and the notes of each class as tentative expressions; further experience may require an entire re-classification, an entire restatement of the so-called laws of nature. In plain words, we are to accept things as they present themselves to us. We are not to surmise the existence of harmonizing and explanatory facts which are not revealed as such. The law of cause and effect is stated as a law of phenomenal sequence. Observed facts are the *all* which it is licit to contemplate.

What becomes of art, if this be the true attitude of the intelligent? What is its office? To express these observed laws of nature, these abstract statements of her customary workings, allegorically for the sake of those who are yet unable to grasp them directly. Art takes the rank of a more or less unconscious expositor of science. This is the rank that M. Taine assigns to it in the first chapters of his *Philosophy of Art*. But, on the hypothesis of ultimate universal education, this office will become useless. Art will have a sinecure. It will be more and more transparent, surrendering more and more its concrete methods. Finally, art will be, as a teacher, altogether relegated to the nursery or kindergarten. To cultivated men its only sphere of enjoyable usefulness would be that of mimicry. But mimicry is permanently pleasureable only to those who possess, or believe that they can and will possess, the real things mimicked. What a torment was that of Tantalus! What a diabolical spirit would be that of a mimicking art for the poor and impotent, showing them what they might enjoy but must never have! Its sphere of

possible beneficence is identical with the sphere of its uselessness and supersession by actual things. The rich can enjoy more or less the imitative suggestions of art, because they can at any moment replace them by the positive objects suggested. What is then presumably the dignity left to art? The mirror behind a splendid show-case, feebly duplicating what is before it, for an instant's frivolously amusing illusion as the passer-by looks in!

Remember that all idealizing in art is banned by positivism as sentimentality quite behind the times. Art can therefore reasonably furnish nothing but what already exists far more satisfactorily in sensible reality. Whenever she exploits the vaulting ambition of the heart, suggests the pursuit of rainbow-contacts, she is an immoral disturber of the normal contentment which the practical man should cultivate above all else.

Let us summarize for positivism. The love of things "as they are" makes art wicked for the poor, foolish and trifling for the rich. But what is wicked, or foolish and trifling suffers extinction in due time. Only what is kindly, beneficent, wise, and useful will in the long run be sought and preserved by men.

As men develop more and more, their capacity for thought, they take less and less of dominant pleasure in the play of the senses, and therefore in the presentation of truth through sensible combinations, which is *art*, according to positivism. Direct approach to truth is preferred to circuitous wanderings; immediate sight to the guess-work of so-called intuition or faith. How easy it is to show from past and present experience what must always be the fate of art

with those who prefer abstract sentiments about the workings of things to the things themselves! What patronizing affability, at the very best, do not your scholars, scientists, philosophers, and theologians show to art and artists; what a half-cynical respect, put on for the sake of courtesy, do they not show for the fine phrensy and its methods of operation! The arid scholar, scientist, philosopher, and theologian, when in a particularly gentle humor, will grant, maybe, to art a subordinate place among the forces working for the dissemination of knowledge and the acceleration of culture. Now and then a gracious Darwin will go so far as to deplore his own lost susceptibility to the charmers of men's half-witted infancy. Some will consider art very convenient as a mine of philological and archæological data, a sort of embalming salve for curious anthropological mummies. The theologian will admit that art is not necessarily pernicious, that under proper conditions "she" may become a "hand-maid" to "Dame" Theology. He overlooks the fact that religion and art have always tended to corrupt each other by a misapprehension of each other's sphere. The artist, in his secret soul, of course reversed the proposition of the theologian. Dame Art found a convenient slave in theology—for theology furnished subjects and purchasers. But Dame Art stooped to conquer, knowing well the bitter temper of her slave, and with gracious words she forced her to a full submission. The mutual attractions of art and theology have always served to disturb their individual equilibrium. Think of some hymns that we sing—the detestable heresies they snugly enshrine for the pious folk, safe from the heresy-hunters, because

enshrined in equally detestable doggerel! Think of the secularization of the church during the periods of art revival! Think of the mortification of art in times of spiritual fervor! To be sure, it is not to an abstract love of truth only that we are indebted for those ghastly eyes, those shrewish cheek-bones, those saintly fingers and toes, those ribs and knee-caps—the whole skeleton grinning through transparent yellow parchment intended to pass for flesh and skin. To be sure, these morbid horrors are due full as much to the spiritual teacher as to the scholar and theologian. Still, we feel that they are presented with the full approval of scholar and theologian. But enough of this. We are content if we have merely indicated the tendency in those given to the search of truth in abstract form to disparage, belittle, and degrade art. If all men should, in the course of time, come to a view such as theirs—and of course a thoroughgoing, orthodox, scientific, scholarly, and theological millennium involves this holy hope—art will lie down to sleep in the tomb of her fathers—a tomb hewn out of the granite of their contempt, and sealed with a sneer for seal.

Let us now set before our minds very briefly the great hypotheses in respect to mind and matter that present themselves to all men except consistent positivists, who decide *a priori* that none of them can have any validity, much less truth, or at least that they have a reasonable right to commit themselves to none.

1. We can hold that matter and spirit are two realities, distinct in essence and nature. They however co-operate, though how and why is not clear.

At this juncture, there is ample opportunity for speculation. We call such a view *dualism*, and all philosophic systems that make it their point of departure, *dualistic*.

2. We can hold that matter and spirit are two phases or manners of appearing to man of one reality; matter, being a generic name for all its self-presentations to the senses; spirit, a generic name for all its self-presentations to the mind. Matter and spirit are thus supposed to be distinct only in our perception, but identical in reality. Upon this theory every particle of matter is at the same time a particle of spirit, in virtue of which fact it is enabled to show itself to our mind. Our body is an organized congeries of material particles, our soul the organized unity of their spiritual potencies. Every change in body is also a change in soul. This theory is called *monism*. It is the doctrine first taught by Spinoza, and ably championed to-day by many notable scientists in Europe and America.

3. We can hold that only one of the two—spirit and matter—is the reality. If we give our preference to matter, and call spirit a function or form of its activity, we profess to believe in the theory salled *materialism*. It may be said that many leading scientists in our day are more or less consistent *materialists*.

4. We can hold that only one of the two—spirit and matter—is reality, and give our preference to spirit. We will call matter a manner of spirit's operation upon us—one mode of its self-manifestation. This theory has been held in modified forms by many of the most eminent philosophers of modern times, and is called *idealism*. To avoid confusion of terms in this paper we shall call it *spiritism*.

Let us begin with materialism, the third philosophic conjecture in the order we arbitrarily assigned to them. The materialist is not like the positivist necessarily hostile to idealistic art—in the sense which we gave to the word *idealizing*:—a giving, in fancy, free scope to the powers of nature; an imaginative hastening of the manifest evolutionary tendency in things. In so far as the materialist is opposed to idealism in art, he suffers from the same limitations as the consistent positivist. He makes art an instructor for primary grades—which science always supersedes with the acquisition of adequate culture; or he makes art a mere mimicker of things. At best the artist plays with certain phases of matter to suggest mental processes which are but functions of the matter of the brain, and which could always be better suggested by the solid things themselves which the artist uses as models. Robert Browning's simoniacal prelate is of this opinion:

We want the same things, Shakespeare and myself,
 And what I want, I have: he, gifted, more,
 Could fancy he too had it when he liked,
 But not so thoroughly, that, if fate allowed,
 He would not have it also in my sense.

Ask him, if this life's all, who wins the game.

—(Bishop Blougram's Apology.)

But realistic art, in the hands of the materialist, will doubtless never be truly *realistic*. He has a theory to prove. Without his will he obscures the data of nature that seem to go against it. He will limit himself to the reproduction of flesh and that which suggests the uses and satisfaction of the flesh. Thus art runs great danger of becoming depraved, a secret,

more or less respectable, generator of base passions. For only by suggesting the pleasures of sense has materialistic art a chance to please and therefore to succeed. And if the materialist gives himself over to idealizing, what a pendemonium will his gallery and his volume of poems become; what a haunt of lascivious nudities and gluttonous excesses! For, after all, as an artist he has a losing cause. He has no source of nobler inspiration; he must be aridly abstract, which is suicidal; or he must make a shameless appeal to the lusts of the flesh.

Dualism and monism will permit of practically the same aesthetic theory, though the latter only is able to assign a definite dignity to art.

Dualism admits the co-operation of matter and spirit. It recognizes the superiority of their united to their single efforts, as all men recognize the superiority of two to one. The more harmonious the co-operation, the more truly are they two, instead of one and a fraction. The sum of their effects is an algebraic sum. In so far as they conflict, they annul each other. The greatest actual result is obtained when all their effects are positive, mutually contributive.

Monism views matter and spirit as two attributes of one substance, whereby we know it to be real. The highest degree of reality for us belongs consequently to that which manifests itself through both, and thus the greatest efficacy and value for man belong to that which has both a material and a spiritual sphere of discernible action.

Dualism and monism, therefore, will alike demand of art a symbol, or sensible body of expression, proportionate to its import, or sensitive soul of mean-

ing. Both will demand an adjustment and balance between thought and technique; with this difference, however, that the dualist will not explain their connection and co-operation. He will not be able to require of the artist a fair equalization of the material and spiritual elements of art. A lack in the one could, theoretically at least, be amply compensated for by a superabundance of the other. Why not? A quite satisfactory answer drawn from the premises of unadulterated dualism seems hardly possible. Whereas the monist can enforce the principle of equilibrium. According to him an expression of the real is defective when one-sided; the real is fully manifest to man only when spirit and matter unite in equal proportion to express it; and since priority belongs to neither, neither should be preferred. Both lose expressive power if either outbalances the other.

(Supposing that either dualism or monism be verified by the racial evolution of man, what chance has art for perpetuity? The dualist will hardly, the monist certainly not, give his preference to abstract science. The very fact that it is abstracted from one real element in things makes it inferior to concrete art. According to monism, at least, science should be the mere forerunner and prophet. Art is its fulfillment. The world wants art, not science. Science discovers the idea, art gives it a fuller reality, setting it in competition with sensible things. We do not mean to deny that monism as well as dualism will allow of a realistic theory of art, which would be just as suicidal in this case as any other. But we would affirm that there is an inherent reason why the dualist as well as monist will be, as artist, a champion of idealism. Many

ideas he finds embodied, many are bodiless. When will his works best compete with real things? When embodying ideas more satisfactorily embodied by them, or when furnishing palpable, visible and audible forms to ideas that are nowhere, or at all events rarely, embodied by them? Will not the artist naturally lean toward idealism, toward the representation of rare and fortunate combinations? Will he not abjure, even without any thought upon the subject, the realism which would make competition with things an impossibility for his work? Both dualist and materialist, recognizing the reality of spirit, make logical the embodiment of hitherto homeless ideas. A positivist is committed to realism, a materialist can idealize only by an exaggeration of what appears.

But it is still possible to ask the question why should the dualist and the monist resort to art? If an idea is homeless in reality, or rare, is it not possible to give it a home, to reproduce it again in the realm of solid things? Now, plainly had man the ability to hasten the evolution of things as he pleased, there would not be the same temptation to create artistic works. But even if the power of adequate interference were not denied him, there would still be the awkward barrier of space. To be sure, there are in the Alps scenes nobler than painter or poet can represent; and in mid-ocean, on the desert, in forest and prairie there are scenes equally noble. How shall they, however, be brought together for comparison, for quiet successive admiration, for repeated scrutiny? Man will always have to console himself with art, no matter what fantastic triumphs over space and time some future Bellamy may predict for him. We do

not deny for a moment, however, that could men be freed from barriers of space and time altogether, could they hasten growth, retard decay, interfere successfully at will with nature, art would cease to have any reason for its existence. Every sane man would prefer perfect things to imperfect copies of perfect things. But, of course, any thing of this sort is not expected. As long as man is a denizen of earth, he will do in idea what he can not do in fact, and he will eternize and embody his idea. We can not make men physically perfect? Well, we will set to work to carve us an Apollo, to image to ourselves what we conceive to be the destiny of human evolution on the plane of physical form. The processes of natural idealizing or evolution are too slow, so we bring them to their close, at least in some worthy work of the imagination. Now we may say that art has thus practical perpetuity. In heaven there may be no architects, sculptors, painters, poets, and musicians; on earth, as long as men have power to think beyond what they see and hear and feel, they will glory in artists and delight in their works.

Nor can it be said that granting this practical perpetuity to art, it will be nevertheless one of ever-decreasing importance. With every attainment, vision and aspiration increase proportionally. The more power man learns to wield over nature, the more powers will he discover yet to be subdued, the more fresh occasions will he find for these powers to exercise a beneficent interference with the course of things. The growth of science is but the herald of a correspondent growth of art. Every advance of science,

the discoverer, is a new opportunity for art the pioneer settler and final inhabitant.

And suppose for a moment that no new subjects, no new realms to conquer, be discovered by science. There is not only a real need for a unique incorporation of an idea, there must be series of manifold re-incarnations. *Omnis determinatio est negatio*. Say what you will, the soul is persuaded that so it is. In imagination man's protean self can adapt itself to many and various external expressions. Why should only one of two possible, mutually exclusive moods be made dominant? Why should the soul, that is to-day placid and to-morrow tumultuous, have a neutral aspect, or one that fixes this rather than that of these equally real phases of its being? Why is there no audible minority report? Perhaps that minority constitutes the true "remnant!" What soul does not realize that much of what is best is in the never to be suppressed yet evermore thwarted minority; unable thus to gain the ascendant and impress itself on the body?

Man believes the self to be many in aspect, but perceives the body to be one—a composite photograph at the very best—and therefore a quite inadequate portraiture. So the Madonna idea is as wide and deep as mankind. Why should she, the beautified Virgin, have dark hair and dark eyes only? Are there no fair-haired, blue-eyed mothers? Is only the dark-haired and dark-eyed to feel herself akin to the ideal of virgin womanhood? Indeed, the heart of mankind would feel better satisfied could eyes and hair have all humanly possible hues at once; and since that may not be, the next best thing is a series of

presentations or external conceptions of the one Madonna idea. The true artist-soul loves, values all—even the least gracious—all that are sincere attempts to give a real body to the idea. He will feel that only when all normal womanly types have been sanctified by due dedication to the Madonna idea in some masterpiece, has the spirit of art fulfilled its proper task. And all this will have a philosophic justification for the monist. The various presentations are various attempts to give reality to an idea, and its indeterminateness for humanity at large demands this variety of embodiment. And what has been said of eyes and hair, and other externals, is true also of more inward possibilities of womanly variation. Wonder, humility, pride, amazement—what might not be the emotion with which the girl-mother views her divine child? The task of art is thus infinite. Only with an evolution working steadily toward tedious uniformity of type, and unanimity of emotive response to circumstances, will art ever suffer a check to her triumphal procession.

(Last of all theories let us consider idealism or, as we have agreed to call it through this paper, spiritism. What will be its effect upon aesthetics? Matter and all its phenomena are but modes of the spirit's activity; more or less supposititious media of its practical, willed self-exercise. They are felt to be unreal, or real only with a borrowed reality. The ideal of spiritism is pure thought, never invested with sensible symbol-forms, immediately communicated, potent in and of itself to create and alter currents of thought and feeling. To the spiritist, who is thorough-going, all art-expression is but a confession of our poverty,

of our deplorable incapacity for direct intercourse. It is but a poor temporary substitute, an educative chrysalis, from which human soul-communication will have to free itself ere it can unfold the full glory of its possibilities.

Spiritism is not, however, restless in this realm of the apparent. In dealing with it, perfectly persuaded that spirit alone has prime reality, its votary knows that he is dealing with a mask, a show, a phantasm, at most a symbolic alphabet. The only purpose of the visible, audible, tangible expression of art, is the conveyance of "meaning."

Here, as is so often the case, we find extremes of thought meeting in one practice. Positivism and materialism resemble spiritism in this dissatisfaction with art. Only the former regard it as capable of supersession by science—abstract statements about material phenomena—or by the phenomena themselves; while the latter, spiritism, would not know what to do with such abstract statements or such phantoms. It desires an immediate experience of the Reality underlying that matter of which the so-called laws, or formulated habitudes, constitute science.

Under the intellectual patronage of spiritism art becomes mystic or merely significant. Consequently it becomes very soon conventional, because it attends so little to the models of nature, and desires the quickest and brightest flash of meaning with the least flame of sense; and there is always the danger that the symbol should be too startling if new, too attractive and all-absorbing if beautiful, detracting therefore from the prominence of the thing symbolized!

That art can not but die away when serving as

a hieroglyphic tongue gradually simplified, more and more rigid and sterile, is not only theoretically, but we think practically, demonstrable. Christianity, in so far as it necessitates a philosophy, is purely idealistic. To the masses it is conveniently dualistic. To all mystics, pietists, vigorous seekers after God, art loses rapidly in interest, and why this will always be so, is easy to understand.

As Browning puts it so well in his "Rabbi Ben Ezra," the true mystic does not consider that mere *work* or *efficacy* is the test of a man and his success.

It is indeed

"What the world's coarse thumb
And finger fail to plumb"

that he prizes most in himself. As artist, therefore, he would wish to express

"All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure

That weighed not as his *work*, yet swelled the *man's* amount."

And yet, as he shows, the artist is impotent to do this except by most pitiful suggestions, for these rarest realities are

"Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a *narrow* act,"

and not therefore dramatically presentable; no material for architect, sculptor, painter;—

"Fancies that broke through language and escaped,"
ay, eluding the very poet! At last, only the musician will be patronized by the spiritist. But, as Cousin points out, it will be because music expresses nothing definitely, that it will for a time pass for an adequate expression of all. Soon, however, the imperious teacher of high things will see that he has been de-

luded; that *infinitiveness* is not *infinity*—is indeed dangerous, as it will express the exalted and the sensual with equal impartiality, for ascetic and worldling respectively, being rather of the nature of a stimulant, like hashish, which gives each man his paradise in total accord with the man's soul.

Now, we do not deny that the spiritist takes interest in art; only we desire to point out that this will be due not to his spiritism, but rather to that section of his nature yet unsubdued by his theory, or to his desire to use art as a common ground with the unconverted masses. All mankind having once become absolute spiritists in practice as well as in theory, there would be a wholesale translation of mankind, so to speak, in chariots of fire, drawn by steeds of fire, through the obscuring clouds of form to the serene depth of spotless blue, of immediate absorption in the supreme Reality. The body is a barrier. All forms of art would be barriers to ideas. May be, like window-panes of horn, they are more transparent than walls of wood or stone. No panes, however, would be better still.

It is the inherent spiritism of Christianity that produced all the deformed mediæval art, the white-washed walls of Puritan meeting-houses, the exile of ornament and music from the sanctuary, the anti-sacramentalism of the Friends.

We grant that the sacramental system itself,—the symbolic method of instruction with which the New Testament familiarizes us,—seem to give their sanction to art—a charter of practical perpetuity. But we must remember that there is no balance between sign and thing signified; between idea and sensible form.

Like a perfume that can not be imprisoned in the open rose, but will disembody itself and float on the summer air, so the infinite meaning forsakes its finite suggestion. The mind fastens on the idea, and forgets the form; and with this forgetting comes neglect; and with the neglect of form, the decay of art. No one will argue, we believe, that the spiritism of Christianity ever gave a healthy encouragement to art. Spiritism is of necessity superarrogant when confronted with the translation of spirit in material language. Art, so to say, takes a little of heaven and brings it illusively down to earth. Religion strives to seize upon earth and bodily transport it into heaven. How can religion of the spiritual kind, whose problem is the apotheosis of man, agree upon fair terms of agreement with the arts whose main effort it is to terrestrialize heaven, making even the Ancient of Days appear as infinitely "magnified man," in statue, painting, and poem?

To summarize in conclusion the results of our discussion. Art will thrive, hold a position of perpetual dignity only with monism regnant.

It must suffer more or less from the predominance of either materialism or spiritism.

Under the absolutely consistent rule of positivism, art must perish.

With dualism supreme, art would run great risk of losing a fair balance, because the dualist is so sure to emphasize one or the other of his uncombina-ble hostile twain.

We venture to suggest that the undisputed acceptance of monism itself might tend to injure the artist, making his work too conscious a practice of a

precise and rigid aesthetic. Who knows but that the predominance of no theory in particular—intellectual anarchy—the mutual checkmating of various theories—leaving the artist heart-whole and fancy-free to follow his creative instincts—constitutes the most favorable condition for a robust and delight-giving art? In that case, what of the perpetuity of art, on the hypothesis of a steady growth of civilization and intellectual order?

VI. GERHARDT HAUPTMANN.

“ Say what you will,” wrote the morose and fantastic Beddoes, “ I am convinced the man who is to awaken the drama must be a bold trampling fellow, no creeper into worm-holes, no reviver even, however good. Such ghosts as Marlowe, Webster, etc., are better dramatists, better poets, I dare say, than any contemporary of ours, but they are ghosts; the worm is in their pages; and we want to see something that our great grandsires did not know.” If this be true—and does any one question it, when the long list of brilliant attempts at tragedy from the pens of poets of undoubted talent, nay genius, is remembered which have disappointed the expectations of our century in France, England, and Germany—if this be true, if our modern dramatist must bid farewell to Sophocles and Shakespeare and forget Seneca and Racine—then we may with some confidence heed the promptings of the heart and mind, which declare that after all Hauptmann may be “ the man.”

One is always much embarrassed when confronted with some new thing. By what standard shall it be measured? Dare we allow ourselves to be pleased, and, still more rash, venture to express our pleasure at something wholly unprecedented? It is all very safe to take pleasure in conventional fashion, along paths well fenced to right and left by respected criticism; but to declare that in some open wilderness one has thor-

oughly enjoyed one's self, seems to argue a dash of reckless boldness or sheer stupidity.

What shall we say of Hauptmann's work? Is it entitled to the noble name of tragedy? He who accepts Mr. Taine's definition of art will of course not be unwilling to confer the title of poem on any clever piece of realism. But to us, poetry is not the handmaid of science, is not a mere illustrator,—a concrete expression of abstract truth. We have had our doubts as to "Mr. Sludge the Medium," and not a few other compositions of Mr. Browning, great poet though he be. Man imitates, but soon he is not content with imitation; he creates, or, more correctly speaking, he makes his imitation yield a more unalloyed aesthetic pleasure than nature, on account of her very complexity, can do, except at very rare or fortunate moments. The brightest or noblest art, that art which nature can not rival, presents the ideal distinctly, quickens in us a certain spiritual energy by inspiring an extra-natural certainty that the perfect is not a spectral category, but one into which all things are destined in the end to fall. Of course, the finality of the ideal can be presented negatively and positively. By the statuary, whose marble and bronze mean permanence and speak of reality, the beautiful must be clearly set forth directly. In the poem, whose materials are in the last analysis successive sounds suggesting mental images that follow or supplant each other, materials that inevitably convey an impression of impermanence and vanity, the negative presentation of the ideal is more potent. Hence, in the drama, stress and sorrow have vanquished the ideal of peace and happiness. By the doom of evil and error, the survival of good

and truth can be more effectively insinuated than by a futile attempt to express their permanence directly. We would not, therefore, insist that a poem, particularly a dramatic poem, should deal only with things in themselves likely and amiable. Let it make us feel the presence of the ideal world and we shall be content, no matter what its manner of structure, no matter what the materials it elects to fashion. Of course, it will ever differ from the oration, in that oratory has for its end the persuasion of us who hear, to move our wills and make us do or forbear from doing its purpose. The poem does not attempt to convince or persuade. It solves no problem, recommends no methods. It simply succeeds, if it be a true poem, in setting the ideal before us, and making us bow down to worship its perfection. If it puts any compulsion upon us, it is not to *do* this or that, but to *be* it. Therefore, we can ask of no dramatic poem that it be moral in the sense of ethically instructive.

Our judgments of what is really requisite for a tragedy in order that it be a poem of high order, have been possibly confused by a narrow conception of beauty. Just as in the sensuous world the seemingly pleasurable must be carefully distinguished from the beautiful, so in the moral world what elicits our approval as good must be distinguished from what creates enthusiasm, as being again the beautiful. Even in the rational world the beautiful has its place. Philosophic systems not only convince us or fail to do so, but they can impress us, because of their self-sufficient coherence and exuberance of interior life, with a sense of their beauty. Whatever stands not in need of any thing else to justify its existence to us, what-

ever is conceivably its own vital end, besides arousing special direct feelings, stimulates indirectly our aesthetic self to action. Now, the drama deals with conduct. It is made up of monologues and dialogues implying action, not describing it. The beauty that we should demand of it as essential is ethical, not sensuous or rational. These other kinds of beauty, so to say, may be present, but can be conceived as absent, without impairing the character of the drama, as poem, as a concrete presenter of the ideal by means of words. We are, of course, likely to overlook this, because we have had till now no great examples of such work which sought and won success on purely dramatic lines. The Greek stage was scarcely differentiated from the rostrum. Declamation, narrative, and oratory were still in the eyes of Sophocles legitimate dramatic means. The chorus, with its lyric odes, made rhythm and verbal charm an attraction, and to a great extent imposed them on the drama proper. The plays of Shakespeare discard the lyric ode. The oration, however, still keeps its place to some extent. Bits of choice language, not given because needed by the drama as such, but supposed to add nobility, dignity, and sweetness to it, are not rare. Nevertheless, we see that the drama now believes in itself, so that the help it gets of this adventitious sort is relatively insignificant when compared with its own stern and legitimate splendors.

But Hauptmann ventures to create tragedies in which he relies on the inherent power of the drama alone. Verbal and stylistic beauties are abandoned. Verse-forms to charm the ear are not used. And surely thereby the illusion of the drama is increased.

The language is such as under given circumstances given characters might be expected to use with no external pressure, such as that used by the consciousness of a critical audience. When a tragedy of Racine has been played, we feel it was written and acted for us, with us in view. Hauptmann has not allowed his characters to take our existence into consideration and consequently we believe them to be real men and women, not the puppets of the god of Fiction. Hauptmann has also abandoned the thought that the chief characters must be in themselves good or noble. The drama is concerned with action not characters. Its beauty is to be primarily that of the action. Its nobility and dignity must emerge from that and from its consequences. Hence he does not feel obliged to introduce us to a cloister of saints, or to a drawing room of gentle people. Like Shakespeare he goes forth into the world, but, unlike Shakespeare, he furnishes the characters it gives him for heroes with no wedding garments of conventional respectability or social importance. For Hauptmann is wholly of an age in which science has made accuracy a virtue, anachronism distasteful, and every disguise and compromise of recognized truth ridiculous, not to say offensive. He relies for his success on the mutual action of character on character. He is unsparing in his contempt of the unideal, and the ideal is perhaps all the more vividly presented to our minds because he somehow forces our consciences to present it to themselves, transmuting by a vital necessity the despair of his catastrophe into ecstatic faith, tranced vision of what he has made us feel must be.

Are there still any who will say: Why put the

evil, the ugly, and ignoble on the stage, when there is so much of these in the world about us? A plausible plea. Yet let us consider. Is it true that the world shows us evil as evil, ugly as ugly, ignoble as ignoble? If it did, could we ever be misled into abandoning ideals, and condescending to unworthy compromise with things hideous, base, or petty? Surely not. If the artist can contrive to make us see and feel the world as it is, its evil, ugliness, and coarseness would be self-destructive, and their opposites would appear as alone real, eternal, and capable therefore of giving stability and durableness to life. To have imparted an unreasoned personal conviction of the impossibility of life without goodness, nobility, refinement, and sweetness, is to a living man tantamount to proving their possibility, probability, nay their reality as though by the evidence of the very senses.

To vindicate the most vigorous realism in the hands of a conscientious, healthy dramatist is not of course to say that Racine has no charm, Sophocles no power, Shakespeare no completeness of illusion. It is simply to point out the possibility of a bare drama working upon us as such, without outside aid. To object that there is great danger in dissolving time honored partnerships like those referred to above, and that to discard the help they offer is rash because there will be need of greater genius to achieve success in such work,—equal to that of Sophocles, Racine, or Shakespeare in theirs,—is to say self-evident things. The question is not one of ease or difficulty, but one of possibility. It is first of all a question of creative impulse. If there is to be a

drama of to-day it will have to be such a drama. Every thing points in that direction. The hopelessness of Shakespearian revivals is clear. Revivals are never rivals to originals. The rival of Shakespeare will be a realist, or will never exist.

In Hauptmann's first great work—in some respects the most audacious and hazarded of his experiments (or shall we say achievements?), there occur some words on this subject that are worth quoting, though of course they are words suited to the character speaking them, and may be by no means expressive of the author's own views:—

"Helen: Perhaps you can inform me on a matter. There is so much talk in the newspapers about Zola and Ibsen: are they great poets?

Loth: They are not poets at all, Miss Helen, but necessary evils. I am thirsty, and ask the poet to give me a clear, quickening drink. I am not ill. What Zola and Ibsen offer is medicine."

And here we may venture to say that there is a great difference, which no amount of genius can expunge, between realism in the drama and realism in the novel. In the drama, the proportions of the painful to the pleasurable, of the hideous to the attractive, are those of the author. But the novelist has no such power over reader as the dramatist has over the spectator. The reader can loiter at will in pestiferous fens. The reader can stop where he pleases in the process of the narrated events and escape altogether the salutary effect of the conclusion. For him, cause and effect, sin and suffering, are not indissolubly linked, and therefore the novelist may harm where the dramatist might do good. From the enforced succession of the play's various scenes there is no es-

cape. Then, too, the dramatist is understood at once. A hint suffices, and our system vigorously reacts from the shock. The novelist must stretch out through pages an elaborate analysis, giving time for the evil, the hideous, the ignoble, to filter into the soul. So that, while doubtless Hauptmann out-Zolas Zola, he does so with a quite unexpected result, if we have founded our expectations on what we know of the novels of the Frenchman.

From Ibsen, too, our dramatist differs very materially. In the Norwegian's dramas, the chief characters are usually persons, not maybe *insane*, surely *un-sane*. There is in them all a certain strained extrordinariness which marks them out as exceptional people. They are morbid results of an age of transition—"between two worlds," as Matthew Arnold expressed it—the consequence of the deadly feud of science and old beliefs that have not yet re-expressed themselves in its terms, which, in the meanwhile, gives men and women over to erratic fancy, whim, and mania as practical guides through the maze of life.

The characters in the dramas of Hauptmann are common-place, familiar beings, such as we have all met or can readily meet if we choose to do so. We need no introduction. We know them by recognition or intuition. Their fate, therefore, concerns us, if possible, more nearly than that of Ibsen's characters. Twenty Solnesses would have to fall from the house-tower to create in us the complete horror and sense of doom that the suggested suicide of Helen does. And be this said not in disparagement of Ibsen. Doubtless Hauptmann and his German brother dramatists are the legitimate descendants of Goethe, as the poet

of certain scenes in the First Part of Faust, but to Ibsen they owe much of their courage and success.

"Vor Sonnen Aufgang" gives us a fearful picture of unearned wealth degrading men below the level of brutes. An old drunken peasant, made rich, like many of his neighborhood, by the discovery of coal on his lands, has two daughters. When his wife dies, the younger is sent to a boarding-school and made a "lady." The older one is courted and married for her money by a gentlemanly university student. He speculates with what he gets from his father-in-law, becomes rich in his own right, loses conscience, becomes through and through corrupt. His wife is addicted to drink. The farmer marries a coarse, insolent, ruffianly woman, made intolerable by her pride of wealth. Helen, the younger daughter, is brought back from school into this detestable environment. Her brother-in-law, Hoffman, ought to be a comfort to her, but he has sunk, in reality though not apparently, to a level below theirs. Loth, Hoffman's old university friend, a member of the Reichstag, having been imprisoned for radical views, comes to write up the situation of the laboringmen in the coal fields and of the peasants to whom their labors bring unearned affluence. He hears of Hoffman's being there, visits him, stays with him, little by little gets his bearings, and finds Hoffman his irreconcilable enemy should he persist in his purpose. Helen falls in love with Loth, the first good man she has ever seen, to her a revelation of hitherto undreamed possibilities. Loth pities and loves Helen, but does not know of her father's and sister's hopeless drunkenness. The family physician called in to attend Hoffman's wife chances to

be an old friend of Loth, and he makes up his mind to save him from the fearful curse of marrying a drunkard's daughter. The law of heredity is wielded mercilessly by this cynical little bachelor physician, till Loth in a frenzy takes flight and leaves Helen no visible escape but suicide from the infectious vileness about her.

A terrible subject, awfully handled. Already in this first play Hauptmann succeeds in giving us the background so cleverly, by quite natural chance hints, that we can hardly tell how we got to know all we do about the previous history of the family. There is no narrative, no relation irrelevant from the point of view of the characters on the stage, no mechanical devices for giving us a clue.

We can readily understand that this piece should have been made a battle ground between old school and new school. It was for the new movement what *Hernani* was for the literary France of the first half of our century. His next drama is "*Das Friedensfest*." Here the thesis is that disparity of education and instruction, and the consequent diversity of interests, manners, and moral standard, make congenial felicity and home life impossible. These children of a wrecked union are mutually repellant personalities. All have more or less excellent intentions, and all have made each other miserable with a persistency that seems deliberate and wicked to each one when viewing the rest. One only might be saved by his love of music which takes him out of himself. He loves a sweet, simple girl. Her mother persuades her daughter's lover, whom she has taken into her genial heart as a son, that he must make heroic

efforts and bring about a general family reconciliation with her aid. The attempt is made at fearful cost and fails. William determines not to marry the girl he loves lest he should make her wretched, too, but the girl, with eyes open to all the tiger-life of William's family, trusts to him and love, in spite of William's self and her own mother.

Never was a more ghastly picture drawn of a wrecked home. A mere unwillingness to give each other the benefit of the doubt, the unhesitating ascription of malignant motives to each other, have undermined a family, and ruined morally every member of it but one, who is saved, as it were by fire, through the instrumentality of an unselfish devotion to a noble art, and contact with two noble self-oblivious women, both of whom he loves, one as mother, the other as betrothed.

"Einsame Menschen"—"Lonely Souls"—is a marvelous study of how we can not lift ourselves, ethically, above our age; how we may think, but can not with impunity attempt to feel and act apart from it. What was meant as pure and disinterested is besmirched by suspicions, natural to those on a lower ethical plane, and actually becomes, through the instrumentality of those suspicious, what it falsely seemed to them to be. According to our social conventions any relation between man and woman, intimate and real, which is not imposed by physical affinity, or can not seek refuge beneath the wings of monogamous marriage, is *a priori* sinful. Consequently a purely intellectual and spiritual friendship between the married hero and a clever, fascinating young woman is compelled to assume first an appearance, and then a

character, such as would conflict with the wife's claim to exclusive loyalty and love. An extremely painful subject to be sure; but its treatment is conscientious, and leaves the soul sick with longing for a world in which the spirit shall rule, and the flesh neither intrude, nor dare to bring aspersions against the exercise of its divine freedom of intercourse with spirit. What a sweetly pathetic picture, that noble, unjealous self-belittling wife, who, if her husband only knew, could become whatever he chose! If only "this too, too solid flesh would melt!" But it does not at man's bidding;—heeding only the slow working laws of social progress.

"Die Weber," which has been acted with success in America, is not, of course, as some of our press critics have asserted, a Socialistic drama, still less one whose authorship could be in cold blood—or rather let us say in cold printer's ink—ascribed to a certain cisatlantic anarchist! It simply presents a strike, makes it live before us, shows us the misery that occasions it, and the misery it occasions; leaves us profoundly convinced of the solidarity of society, and the need that our conscience should correspond to our consciousness of that fact. But of this drama so much has been said and written that it were superegratory to rehearse the story here. What impresses one chiefly, however, is that in this piece we are not dealing with the individuals, so vividly presented, as much as with masses of individuals. The interest inheres in the cause, not in particular cases. The catastrophe does not involve any main promoter of the movement so far as the spectator sees, but only an innocent, great-hearted protestor. The *movement*

then is the hero; it has many and various representatives, and when we have heard and seen the play, the actual human world has been before us in process of evolution, an evolution in which individuals are sacrificed to the clearer manifestation of the type.

But what shall we say of "Hannele" * and the savage attacks it suffered when represented in New York? Immoral is it, and blasphemous? Must American morals be protected from its insidious influence? Did our self-constituted censors mean their violent protest seriously, or was it but a boyish April-fool prank out of season—an acted satire on defunct puritan prejudice—an experiment to prove the good nature of a free public? There are many varieties and degrees of excellence. Some books stand out colossal from the background of past reading. Others have a marble moonlight whiteness, an outline solemnly simple, a columnar symmetry, a statuesque nobility. Others again are mere flowers with roadside modesty, with a childlike grace, and so captivating a perfume, rare and faintly exquisite, that we would rather see the colossus, the cathedral, the temple, the statue overthrown and demolished, than have this one quivering thing, all alive with delicate feeling, ruffled by too rough a wind, wilted by a touch too coarse. Now, "Hannele," the little stranger from overseas which was so inhospitably treated by our New York volunteer censors of the stage, is one of those masterpieces that defy criticism. It is too winning and affecting to permit of unbiased scrutiny. From be-

* Translated by William Archer Heinemann, London, '94.

ginning to end, excepting a few songs, it is one quick, nervous dialogue. It is quite as realistic in treatment as any other piece of Hauptmann. He has made us acquainted in it with a bit of the world in which we actually live. Nor has he chosen some favored spot in it, where the envied few delight to dwell. It is a patch of common soil, not beautiful in itself, but the sort of thing we have all about us. The illumination is such as to impart to every thing a preternatural glory. He takes one human lot, but we know that behind it are the terrible millions. To make us feel more keenly, the lot is that of a child, the motherless little step-daughter of a brutalized drunkard. Nothing could be simpler or more original. A painstaking study in child-psychology was not unheard of before "Hannele," but was there ever *such* a study? Furthermore, it is the psychology of its dream state, less fettered, more subtly self-revealing, which is boldly set forth as real to us, quite as though we had been entranced, and made to feel the child's fever pulse throbbing in our own arteries. But this "dream play" has been recently translated into English, and its plot need not detain us here. By it Hauptmann may be known to those who watch the signs in our literary heavens. What then shall we say of it, and of Hauptmann?

Shall we venture to assert that Gerhardt Hauptmann's work answers to the great modern demand for a new drama that may be to us what Shakespeare's was to Elizabethan England? In our world in which aristocracies are obsolescent, if not obsolete, with the vastly altered social conditions which we ascribe to machinery and popular government, can we

feel quite satisfied by dramatic work which does not present us the problems of life in their present complex form? And after all has been said, was not Shakespeare a realist? Did he not give us Elizabethan England upon the stage? What with us is literary affectation, when appearing in the work of Beddoes, for instance, was natural and necessary then. To-day life is sterner. Life is arrayed in less showy colors. We are more matter of fact. The imagination plays no great part in the life of our privileged classes. Oratory is not the power it was. Facts have been made to speak with figures for mouthpiece.

But to attempt a judgment of contemporary genius is folly. Time alone is the winnower. Whatever may be said against "Before Sunrise" and "The Weavers,"—and there is much that can be said with much plausibility,—the charge of "brutal realism" can not be maintained against "Hannele." If any thing could convince us that the drama of actual life, using its language, abandoning all traditional elegance, rhetorical exaggeration, in a word, all stage strut and stage rant, can attain to higher glories than the classicist supposed possible, it would be this piece, the effect of which is that of the work of an idealist infinitely strengthened by the realistic method. And in the long run, it seems clear that the victory is to the Goethe of Faust, not to the Goethe of Iphigenia, to Heine and not to Schiller, in spite of the latter's nobleness of aim. We want to be shown the loftily tragic in the actual. Thus will our daily burden-bearing seem less ignoble, and our drudgery may acquire a majesty of its own. We want to be told, as only the poet can tell us, that it is the human soul,

not the circumstances of life, that makes our dignity; not intellectual achievements and polish, only possible to the few, but moral worth, that distinguishes the hero from the common man; and how can this be more forcibly set forth than by the selection of circumstances adverse to outer dignity, refinement, and culture, notwithstanding which—nay, over which,—the soul is made to triumph?

VI. WALT WHITMAN.

(THE CAMDEN SAGE.)

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

A man of genius has his phases of inner growth, . . . and to look for a narrow, definite, consistent body of doctrine in his writings is to look for something that is not there, that was never intended to be there, and that could not, in the very nature of things, have been there.*

Doubtless something of this sort was in Walt Whitman's mind when he wrote:

I charge you forever reject those who would expound me, for I
can not expound myself.

I charge that there be no theory or school founded out of me.

I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

—(Myself and Mine, p. 190.)†

He had grown. Like Emerson, he cared nothing for mere mechanical consistency.

Do I contradict myself?

Very well, then, I contradict myself. (p. 78.)

Besides, the individual need not consciously trouble himself about being consistent. Life will see to it that he be not. Life is change. Remaining the same is but wearing a mask, or it is death. There is, however, a beautiful continuity in every energetic ca-

* "Walt Whitman," by Wm. Clarke, p. 105. (Macmillan & Co., 1892.)

† All references are to the complete edition of Whitman's works, in two volumes. David McKay, Philadelphia. The simple figures refer to pages in "Leaves of Grass;" those prefixed Pr., to the companion volume of Complete Prose Works.

reer. You find nothing in it which, when you know the whole, you think might not have been predicted at the outset. Yet it was not, because, as a matter of fact, it could not be foreseen.

No man has given us more self-criticism, probably, of a frank, helpful sort, than Whitman. His large volume of prose is practically a commentary on his poetic work. He shows that, in a sense, he certainly could expound himself. His was no incoherent message. He received it gradually, and gave it as he received it; but nevertheless it constitutes a vital whole.

Avowals of irreconcilable tenets—alternate affirmations and denials, that seem the utterances of some concord transcendentalist, who should have lost his wits, and never gone in search of them to any purpose.*

Had I not committed these words to that terrible Satan, the printed page, I should not believe that I understood Whitman so ill eight years ago.

We have a right to demand that there shall be in the several tenets upheld symptoms at least of a possible reconciliation.

After diligently reading "Leaves of Grass," and constructing an index for ready reference to its contents, I still felt obliged to save the author's sanity by supposing he often did not mean what he said! So difficult is Whitman to some of us when we approach him for the first time!

I, too, . . . inaugurate a religion,

Each is not for its own sake.

I say the whole earth and all the stars in the sky are for religion's sake.

I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough.

Know you, solely to drop in the earth the germs of a *greater religion*,

The following chants, each for its kind, I sing. (p. 23.)

* "The Apostle of Chaotism." See Appendix.

If Walt Whitman, then, has rightly conceived of his own mission, it is by a consideration of him as a religious teacher that we shall do well to approach his work.

I have arrived

To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the universe,
For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them. (p. 27.)

Whoever accepts me, he or she shall be blessed and shall bless
me. (p. 123.)

Listen! I will be honest with you.

I do not offer the old, smooth prizes, but offer rough, new prizes.
—(p. 126.)

I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon man and woman,
For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance to all the
gifts of the universe. (p. 216.)

Language so definite as this, so tremendous in import, passes beyond all hyperbolic license, unless, indeed, he has a "new religion," a "greater one," to impart. We have a right to ask him for a redemption of promises so amazing, which should he fail to do, one could hardly help but class him among megalomaniacs—with Professor Lombroso.*

Who has read "Specimen Days," and not felt the loveableness of the man? What beautiful strength and tenderness! His magnetism is irresistible. Then, too, the witness of his friends! What friends! Who was so worshiped by those who knew him? What self-oblivious tenderness and great-hearted enthusiasm did he not elicit? The "*good* gray poet" indeed! It

* "The Man of Genius," by Cesare Lombroso. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1895. For the construction of the above sentence, I have no apology to offer. Ambiguity is often a merit. Cf. p. 45 of Lombroso's book.

is quite in vain he attempts to repel one. He tries to shock us :

Walt. Whitman, a Kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking, and breeding.

—(p. 48.)

He insinuates doubts :

Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal ?

Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a
real heroic man ?

Have you no thought, O dreamer, that it may be all maya, illusion ? (p. 103.)

It is useless for him to speak of

The silent manner of me without charm. (p. 105.)

His defiant, rude treatment of us does not discourage us. We still—shocked though we may think ourselves, and angry with him—hear something in us that says, as Emerson is reported to have exclaimed : “What a man !” And we want to know him better, to understand and test his gospel. If it could give us the secret of his great faith in humanity, for instance, we should be well rewarded for much endurance of his bearish buffeting.

But we ask ourselves, what does Walt Whitman mean by religion ? Does he not bid us “be not curious about God ?” (p. 76.) And what can he mean by driving all the gods from all the heavens like cattle to the crack of his whip—his “barbaric yawp” sounding “over the roofs of the world” (p. 78), into the shambles of his “egotism,” for his “omnivorous lines” (p. 69) to devour ? The ordinary reader is horrified at this greedy ogre, who eats gods instead of children ! (Cf. p. 67.) It is amazing, too,—rather a shock to one’s old-fashioned notions,—to have a wedge literally driven with sledge-hammer blows into the com-

pact Trinity to make room for Satan! Is it a whimsical prejudice against the venerable triangle which makes him attempt to forge on his anvil a "square deific?" (p. 339.) One wonders, somewhat irreverently, how Satan feels between God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; whether he thanks the Camden sage for such unforeseen promotion to uncomfortable glory from his old "bad eminence" in Milton's epic. But, upon reflection, all such questions turn out to be irrelevant. To Whitman, all these divine names represent no persons. For him, they are

Eidolons, eidolons, eidolons. (p. 13.)

Rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself. (p. 67.)

They are

Outlines I plead for my brothers and sisters. (p. 78.)

In plain terms, they are ideals mankind has proposed to itself for attainment. They have been embodied in myth, anchored in historic personages, precipitated by theologians as dogma in the test tube of unimaginative reason. It is for us to realize what, taken together, they *mean*, namely, a divine revelation of our possibilities, which they were fashioned expressly to hand down from age to age, until men could once more have access for themselves to the kingdom of God within them.

1. WHAT IS RELIGION?

We must not be daunted by paradox. Let us turn to Whitman's prose to glean a definition of religion, after we have first weighed the significant fact that he was of Quaker descent, and that he thought it

worth while to write of Elias Hicks and George Fox as follows:

Doubtless the greatest scientists and theologians will sometimes find themselves saying: "It is not only those who know most who contribute most to God's glory." Doubtless these very scientists at times stand with bared heads before the humblest lives and personalities. For there is something greater (is there not?) than all the science and poems of the world—above all else, like the stars shining eternal—above Shakespeare's plays, or Concord philosophy, or art of Angelo or Raphael, something that shines illusive, like beams of Hesperus at evening—high above all the vaunted wealth and pride—proved by its practical outcropping in life, each case after its own concomitants, the intuitive blending of divine love and faith in a human emotional character—blending for all, for the unlearned, the common, and the poor. (Pr., p. 472.)

What is poor, plain George Fox compared with William Shakespeare—to fancy's lord, imagination's heir? Yet George Fox stands for something, too, a thought, the thought that wakes in silent hours—perhaps the deepest, most eternal thought latent in the human soul. This is the thought of God, merged in the thoughts of moral right, and the immortality of identity. Great, great is this thought—aye, greater than all else, . . . the only certain source of what all are seeking, but few or none find—in it I for myself see the first, the last, the deepest depths and highest heights of art, of literature, and of the purposes of life. I say, whoever labors here, makes contributions here, or, best of all, sets an incarnated example here, of life or death—is dearest to humanity—remains after the rest are gone. And here, for these purposes, and up to the light that was in him, the man Elias Hicks—as the man George Fox had done years before him—lived long, and died, faithful in life, and faithful in death. (Pr., p. 476.)

I have transcribed these two paragraphs because they are likely to help the perplexed student to a better understanding of Whitman. He can not bear to have abstractions compete for our interest with men and women. Better than any theology is a man. Better than any metaphysical idea of God is a woman.

(p. 175.) It is after all the idea of the diety incarnated by avatars in human form (p. 115) that alone seriously interests him.

He sees eternity in men and women; he does not see men and women as dreams or dots. (p. 270.)

"In the faces of men and women," he sees "God," and in his "own face in the glass." (p. 76.) Every thing is for the soul's sake. To be of worth, it must contribute to the soul. "The universe itself" is merely "a road . . . for traveling souls." (p. 127.)

What then is religion? A state of the soul? What then is God? A vision the soul obtains of itself? According to Whitman, these would be fair definitions. And in these definitions he would not be straying far from Quakerism as he understood it.

The true Christian religion (such was the teaching of Elias Hicks) consists neither in rites, or bibles, or sermons, or Sundays, but in noiseless, secret ecstasy and unremitted aspiration, in purity, in a good practical life, in charity to the poor and toleration to all. . . . He believed little in church as organized, . . . but he believed always in the Universal Church, in the soul of man, invisibly rapt, ever-waiting, ever-responding to universal truths. (Pr., note, p. 464).*

It is the doctrine of "the light within" which constitutes the vital core of Quakerism. Walt Whitman perceives a kinship thus between Fox and Hicks and Plato. It is the same "doctrine that the ideals of character, of justice, of religious action, whenever

* Whitman views religion as essentially unsocial: "I should say, indeed, that only in the perfect uncontamination and solitariness of individuality may the spirituality of religion positively come forth at all. Only here, and on such terms, the manifestations, the devout ecstasy, the soaring flight," etc. The rest of this interesting paragraph is well worth referring to. "Democratic Vistas." (Pr., p. 233.)

the highest is at stake, are to be conformed to no outside doctrine of creeds, bibles, legislative enactments, conventionalities, or even decorums, but are to follow the inward deity-planted law of the emotional soul." (Pr., p. 465.) In his prefatory note (Pr., p. 455), he comments on Hicks as "pointing to the fountain of all . . . religion . . . in yourself and your inherent relations." "Others talk of bibles, etc., . . . the canons outside of yourself," . . . but Elias Hicks points "to the religion inside of man's very own nature."

The point at which Walt Whitman takes issue with Elias Hicks is the Quaker's *thorough* exclusive belief in the Hebrew scriptures. Walt Whitman has not restricted himself to them, so that his own religion might be termed a Quakerism cut loose consistently from the last shadow of external authority, not substituting for the Bible any *consensus* even of all the sacred books of the world. Nor is he unappreciative of these. Only he observes:

I do not say they are not divine;

I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still.

It is not they who give the life; it is you who give the life.

Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth,
than they are shed from you. —(p. 172.)

If it is possible for the soul to get "passage indeed to primal thought," to its "own clear freshness," to "realms of budding bibles" (p. 320), why should a man any longer "take things at second or third hand," or "look through the eyes of the dead," or "feed on the specters of books?" Why not "filter them from oneself?" (p. 30.) Even the "saviours" are "countless," but only historical or mythical names

for "saviours latent within" oneself, where "bibles" "equal to any" can be unclasped and read. (p. 350.) The "outside authority" ought always to enter after the precedence of inside authority. (p. 153.) With such a rigid test as his, "outside authority" in the matter of spiritual beliefs, it is clear there can be none. It is, to be sure, only the old Catholic test, the "*ab omnibus*," which, with the Christian traditionalist, however, always carefully excludes the heretic as though he were non-existent. The appeal was to the universal consensus, but the nature of what the consensus ought to be was so preassumed as to eliminate objectionable factors. With Whitman there is no such *petitio principii*.

Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so.

Only what nobody denies is so. (p. 83.)

As for the "inside authority" it is challenged and brought into play by the outside world:

All truths wait in all things. (p. 53).

All truths of the earth continually wait, they are not so concealed either,

They are calm, subtle, intransmissible by print.

They are imbued through all things, conveying themselves willingly,

Conveying a sentiment and invitation. (p. 176.)

The tests of truth are always,

Inner, serene, unapproachable to analysis, in the soul,

Not traditions, not the outer authorities are the judges,

They are the judges of outer authorities and of all traditions.

—(p. 305.)

In fact,

Whatever satisfies souls is true. (p. 201.)

If your soul is diseased it can not be trusted.

Yet, again, you would have to trust your soul as to

what healthier man should be made your test. For of course arguments do not convince. They usually are excuses the soul furnishes to the mechanical side of itself for entertaining certain convictions. In the last analysis "outside authority" invariably turns out to be "inside authority," more or less arbitrarily attached to some exterior symbol.

How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed !

How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels before a man's or woman's look !

All waits or goes by default till a strong being appears ;

A strong being is the proof of the race and of the ability of the universe.

When he or she appears materials are overawed,

The dispute on the soul stops,

The old customs and phrases are confronted, turned back, or laid away. (p. 153.)

Of course the great man can not directly enlighten us, but though "Wisdom can not be passed from one having it to another not having it," though "Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof," yet "Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out of the soul." (p. 123). And no sight is so potent to elicit wisdom from our souls as the sight of the wise man. When in doubt of my very being, "A morning glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books." (p. 39.) More than "a university course," and the learned memories with which it has stored the soul, "A slumbering woman and child convince." (p. 175.)

I see the sleeping babe nestling the breast of its mother,

The sleeping mother and babe hushed, I study them long and long. (p. 217.)

And the last resort always will be to the touch of

a loving hand. All "the terrible doubt of appearances" is answered:

When he whom I love travels with me or sits a long while holding me by the hand,

When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that words and reason hold not, surround us and pervade us,

Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom, I am silent, I require nothing further,

I can not answer the question of appearances or that of identity beyond the grave,

But I walk or sit indifferent, I am satisfied,

He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me. (p. 175.)

Who that has been with his fellow-men in their sorest need has not found that all one man can do for another is to be himself strong, convinced, patient, and to press the sick or dying doubter's hand tenderly?

Considering, however, the extent to which he carries out all its implications, we ought not to be amazed when we find Walt Whitman's doctrines of the inner light admitting of companions from lands and literatures strange to Christendom. The doctrine of a spiritual body of St. Paul of Tarsus, Emanuel Swedenborg, and William Blake hobnobs goodnaturedly with a metempsychosis doctrine definitely indicated; while a doctrine of cosmic cycles faintly looms up in the distance; and Vedantic views are at times expressed with such originality and energy as to have brought a smile of delight to the serene immobile countenance of a Hindu friend, to whom I read them.

The negative and positive poles, as it were, of Whitman's current of religion can be pointed out now in his own words. On the one hand we have the "divine pride of a man in himself—the radical foun-

dation of the new religion" (Pr., p. 246); on the other hand "religious" is defined to mean "possessing the idea of the infinite." (Pr., p. 238.) The true thing itself, strictly speaking, is neither, but their union :

Yet I in this dull scene . . . why am I so (almost) happy here and alone ? Why would any intrusion even from people I like spoil the charm ? But am I alone ? Doubtless there comes a time—perhaps it has come to me—when one feels through his whole being, and pronouncedly in the emotional part, that identity between himself subjectively and nature objectively which Schelling and Fichte are so fond of pressing. How it is, I know not, but I often realize a presence here—in clear moods I am certain of it (Pr., p. 105).

Some "vital unseen presence" (Pr., p. 99) haunts for us cold nature—a ghost maybe of ourself. "The victorious fusion" in man "of the Real and Ideal," which the poet sets forth, is Religion. (Pr., p. 398.)

But Walt. Whitman puts the matter, I conceive, once more in different terms :

Great—unspeakably great—is the Will ! the free Soul of man. (Pr., p. 336.)

Something that fully satisfies—that something is the All, and the idea of the All, etc. (Pr., p. 253.) I have the idea of all, and am all, and believe in all. (p. 192.)

"The eternal soul of man" (Pr., p. 286) is to be saved—freed—by union with this "Idea of the All." "Liberty," he tells us is not "release from all law."

The wise see in it, on the contrary, the potent Law of Laws, namely, the fusion and combination of the conscious will, or partial individual law, with those universal, eternal unconscious ones which run through all Time, pervade history, prove immortality, give moral purpose to the entire objective world, and the last dignity to human life. (Pr., p. 337.)

The whole matter is restated in a note to his essay, "Poetry To-day in America." (Pr., p. 299.) The "conscious will" is to be reconciled to the "great uncon-

scious and abysmic second will." The soul is to "cheerfully range itself under universal laws, and embody them."

But unfamiliar with oriental speculations, or not possessing a sure grasp of the principle of "inner light" and what it logically leads to (particularly as the Friends never followed it out to the end, restrained, unconsciously by the language of Christian theological tradition), there may be those who find it difficult to represent to themselves the position of Whitman. Another method of approach may perhaps serve them in good stead. I shall allow myself, therefore, a brief abstract disquisition, with no intent of converting them to Whitman, or any notion of stating personal views.

There are the great ecstatic moments of the soul. Strange moments! * To some they have come in nature, to others "at a meeting;" to some from an idea, to others from an ideal; to some meditating on scientific law, to others in poetic dreams; to some during metaphysical speculations, to others when confronted with a living character. In every instance, however, the rapture was of the same nature. The soul became fluid feeling, and embraced the visible universe as the ocean would an island; and now the man has ebbed back to his ordinary self, the old indefinite extent of conscious feeling at ecstatic high tide is thought to exist, apart from him, centered outside of him. There arises thus a painful sense of the gap between the self of ecstasy and the self of ordinary thought and feeling. Having once experienced the blissful obliteration

* Cf. Emerson's Essay on the "Over Soul."

tion of all hostility to the soul, the momentary swallowing up of all that claims to be independent of the soul by the soul, one can never again be rid of hunger and thirst for the renewal of the experience at least in some degree. All beautiful arts, all religious organizations, are separate efforts to accomplish this. Those with whom these means are invariably successful, let an overflow of gratitude glorify them. They praise with enthusiasm statue, picture, symphony, society, creed. The experience thus tends to become all the more readily an empty tradition. Those who have not had it very naturally suppose that the works of art or the theological doctrines and ecclesiastical rites are in themselves the end, instead of mere means to this spiritual ecstasy. Occasionally such formalists stumble on the true meaning of the doctrines they have received. More often are men initiated by extreme sorrows and despairs. Then they wonder they could have so long handled holy things without the knowledge of their true purpose, when, after all, they bear the stamp of it so plainly upon them for him who has eyes and sees.

Now, one reason so few understand this mystic secret of religion according to this exposition, is the difficulty of suggesting it by any word. Lay the stress on the ordinary state of man—the so-called real, or actual—more properly termed the apparent, and the obvious danger is that we shall consider the so-called Ideal (more properly the Real) as a god, infinitely different from us; and then, passing by use of language to anthropomorphism—the difference will be construed as a quarrel:—a sin on our part and a wrath on his. Atonement in order to Communion,

becomes then easily a reconciliation through external mediators and through sacrifices—the teachers being the historic basis for the former, their sufferings or the hardships necessary to attainment of the Ideal, giving an objective or subjective rationale to the latter. Of such a nature, it may be argued, are all exoteric religions. The esoteric side of every religion, however, lays the stress, not on the apparent, but the Real. The mystic turns his eyes inward. He can not gaze upon the real core of his own being. That phantom-self vanishes as he approaches, until the mystery is nameless, awful, infinite. So he recognizes in the unfathomable abyss within, the self of hours of ecstasy. He may call it “God,” adopt all the language of his unmystical brethren, but for him it has a new significance. Whether he adopts or not their terms he knows it as Self. The danger, however, appears very soon. To communicate his meaning is well-nigh impossible. In all probability the uninitiated who accepts the mystic as his authority deludes himself, anticipates results, and progress is paralyzed. He thinks there is nothing to do. Because he knows the divine is the Real in him, he takes no pains to transform the apparent, actual man. He gives the flesh, maybe the full license of the spirit, and is immoral on the pretext of being above morality. The dualist, emphazier of the apparent, becomes contrariwise in all probability, if he be in earnest, a chastiser of himself. Thus antinomianism and asceticism are the two penalties men pay for embracing either horn of the dilemma, and misunderstanding the true meaning:—a God without—viewed as separate, hostile, to be reconciled by self-imposed hard-

ships; a God within—viewed as really at one with the worshiper, and therefore the premature assumption of divine freedom! Many Mystics strive to overcome the difficulty by using both lines of expression alternately, and thus, by oscillation between extremes, to indicate what they believe to be the true mean.

Now, Walt Whitman prefers to speak of the potential as actual, to call God, Self, as a rule; though he tries to obviate misconstructions by occasional use of other language, and a constant emphasis on the thought of growth or the Hegelian “becoming.” Change is a death and a birth. What is must cease to be in order that what is to be may come into being. We have had talk of “death unto the flesh,” and “birth from above,” with equivalent phrases, more or less understood, for now nineteen centuries. Whitman prefers to use the conception of evolution or growth instead of those two terms which together express the same thought. He uses the word “death” to indicate the unknown life. He adds often the adjective “heavenly,” lest he be misunderstood to mean by “death” the dissolution of the body or of the soul. Yet, in spite of every effort to be clear, he is steadily misunderstood by most readers for years, unless they have chanced to study the Idealist philosophers of Germany, the Mystics of Christian centuries, the Neoplatonists, or, better yet, for interpreting Emerson and Whitman, the Bhagavad Gita.

2. DIVINE PRIDE.

Let us consider, now, first, what Whitman calls “the radical foundation of the new religion:” the “divine pride in one’s self.” His last words of criti-

cism upon this point will be found in "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads." (Appendix to Leaves of Grass, p. 435.)

"I think this pride indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humanity, deference, and self-questioning."

It is no more than fair to accept his own definition of terms. Whatever would be wholly inconsistent with these states of mind and heart is then not what Whitman means by "pride." One is free, no doubt, to reprehend his use of the word. Perhaps, however, it will not be so easy to find a less objectionable term.

And here, in considering the attitude Whitman takes toward his present undeveloped self because of its great, unspeakable destiny, we can not too forcibly remind ourselves that he does not say these things of himself as other than us; that he really means to put them in our mouths:

I will effuse egotism and show it underlying all. (p. 24.)

I celebrate myself and sing myself,

And what I assume you shall assume. (p. 29.)

All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,

Else it were time lost listening to me. (p. 44.)

It is you talking just as much as myself; I act as the tongue
of you,

Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosened. (p. 75.)

I know perfectly well my own egotism,

Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less,

And would fetch you whoever you are flush with myself. (p. 69.)

He hints that in the "Answerer," or Maker of Ideals, men ought not to, and do not, revere another, whatever they may fancy:

Him they accept, in him lave, in him perceive themselves as amid light. (p. 134.)

If not, how could the "Answerer" or Messiah be of use to men?

And, finally, in order that his object in singing himself may be clear to all, he uses the pronoun "you" in the following lines, as well as in the glorious poem, "To You:" (p. 186.)

Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especially for you,
The divine ships sail the divine sea for you.

Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid
and liquid;

You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in the sky,
For none more than you are the present and the past,
For none more than you is immortality.

Each man to himself and each woman to herself is the word of
the past and the present, and the true word of immortality;

No one can acquire for another—not one,

Not one can grow for another—not one, . . .

And no man understands any greatness or goodness but his own,
or the indication of his own. (p. 178.)

Let no reader, then, be any more disturbed by Lombrosian qualms at Whitman's supposed "Megalo-mania." The very essence of the disease is absurd exaltation of oneself at the expense of one's neighbor; while Whitman's egotism is displayed only to engender the like in his reader, which, whatever one may think of it, is quite a different thing. Nevertheless, the manner of Walt Whitman is so frankly arrogant, he urges such extraordinary claims for us, that many a beginner insists on not taking him at his word and on supposing he meant all these vast attributes and defiant attitudes to be descriptive only of his private personality! On this point, at the risk of being tedious, one can not lay too much stress. Stand-

ing at the grave of Emerson, Whitman uttered these words : *

A just man, poised on himself, all-loving, all inclosing and sane and clear as the sun. Nor does it seem so much Emerson himself we are here to honor—it is conscience, simplicity, culture, humanity's attributes at their best, yet applicable, if need be, to average affairs, and eligible to all. (Pr., p. 197.)

Elsewhere in a very interesting critique on Emerson, he says of him :

His final influence is to make his students cease to worship any thing—*almost* cease to believe in any thing outside of themselves. (Pr., p. 320.)

Now, Whitman would not have us do this “almost,” but altogether:—

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,

You shall listen to all sides and filter them for yourself. (p. 30.)

What were the advantage cutting us loose from all glorious traditions, if he should, in his turn, become one himself, and repress our development from within, which he held as the one law of sterling manhood?

Not I, nor any one else, can travel that road for you,

You must travel it for yourself. (p. 73.)

Besides, he definitely teaches “straying from himself:” (p. 75.)

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to no one else.

—(p. 17.)

And he puts it very unmistakably in fourteen lines, using the figure of the “teacher of athletes,” which end:—

He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher. (p. 74.)

In this matter surely he has been less of an ego-tist than most men of genius. Only now and then

* Whether actually *spoken*, I do not know.

does he refer to himself as a separate person from the reader, and then it is modestly, sometimes pathetically (*e. g.*, "As I ebb'd with the Ocean of Life."—Stanza 2, p. 202). "Every great character," Whitman observes (writing of Elias Hicks), is "adjusted strictly with reference to itself." (Pr., p. 472.) The great lesson of nature is poise, self-sufficiency, appropriation from without only of what can be subordinated to the life that makes us grow from within, and so, assimilated:—

I will confront these shows of the day and night,
I will know if I am to be less than they,
I will see if I am not as majestic as they,
I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they,
I will see if I am to be less generous than they,
I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and ships have
meaning,
I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for themselves,
and I am not to be enough for myself. (p. 275.)

Unconscious contact with "serene moving animals teaching content" and "the primal sanities of nature" (p. 244), is the reason that

The secret of the making of the best persons,
Is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth.
—(p. 123.)

On this account, his "Leaves of Grass" lies "un-born or dead" in libraries. (p. 98.) It is not so much that he refuses to "translate" himself, "except in the open air" (p. 75), but that the seclusion between the four walls makes for the ordinary reader any expansive "divine pride" difficult; and not merely in the case of architecture or music, but in that of every art whatsoever, in the last analysis, as he tells us:

All . . . is what you do to it when you look upon it.

All . . . is what awakes from you. . . . (p. 173; cf. p. 282.)*

But he who contemplates the continence of vegetables, birds, animals, can not but feel with Whitman

The consequent meanness of me should I skulk, or find myself indecent, while birds or animals never once skulk or find themselves indecent. (p. 91.)

Elsewhere, again, in his grim way, he makes us laugh at the proud "Lord of Nature," so called:—

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained,

I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition. . . .

Not one is respectable or happy over the whole earth. (p. 54.)

Consequently—he continues the thought elsewhere,—

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,

I see that the elementary laws never apologize.

I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all. (p. 45.)

And I say to any man or woman, let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes. (p. 76.)

If ever Whitman is sublime, it is when he chants this self-centered "spiritual manhood poised" on itself, "giving, not taking law." (p. 167.)

The joy of manly selfhood!

To be servile to none, to defer to none, not to any tyrant known or unknown,

To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,

To look with calm gaze or with a flashing eye,

To speak with a full and sonorous voice out of a broad chest,

* For the open air, therefore, as a test of literary worth, cf. Pr. 199 and 501, with p. 433 in "Leaves of Grass."

To confront with your personality all the other personalities of the earth. (p. 146.)

O, while I live, to be the ruler of life, not a slave,
To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
No fumes, no ennui, no more complaints or scornful criticisms,
To these proud laws of the air, the water and the ground, proving my soul impregnable,

And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me. (p. 147.)

O to be self-balanced for contingencies,
To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs,
as the trees and animals do. (p. 16.)

“Why should I pray? Why should I venerate and be ceremonious?” asks Whitman. (p. 44.) Yet communion of the soul with God within is the very end and aim of life. None has framed a nobler prayer than that he has put into the mouth of Columbus. (p. 323). Nor does Whitman fail to follow the maxim of Rossetti in Soothsay :

To God at best, to chance at worst,
Give thanks for good things, last as first.

He is always overflowing with gratitude and love. His prose is full of praise and thanksgiving and usually we feel that it goes—as “at best” it should—to God. (p. 398).

But the real questions for the disturbed reader of Whitman to ask himself would be, “what really is worship?” and “what is worship for?” The purpose of uttered worship is relief to the soul which can not any longer endure the pressure of pent adoration. It is to uplift the soul, not in any sense to confer a favor on its god. And the purpose of worship defines its true nature. Not the cries of “Lord, Lord” (Lk. vi, 46; Matt. vii, 21-23), but the doing of the will is the main ingredient. How idolatrous we are

it is not easy for a mind unused to watching its own motions fully to realize. Have you rid yourself of "idols made with hands?" Well, so far, so good. Have you wholly rid yourself of idols made by the imagination? If not, then you are worshiping disembodied idols, ghosts of idols. Is it so wise to decry idolatry, when perhaps you shall find one man only in a million really able to worship God in his unrepresented Being? Would not such worship be practically atheistic for all but that extremely small number who can understand that what most utterly eludes all thought is the most real?

To Whitman, of course, God is Subject of subject, Object of object. Behind yourself is God. Behind the universe is God. You and the universe are the two-fold veil of the One. True worship is worship of that One. Obedience to the Maker is being yourself. To be real is the best homage to Reality. If there is to be worship, it will be beyond words—or it will pass through one of the two symbols—(yourself and the universe)—or through both at one and the same time. Such verbal identification of the One with these is unsatisfactory. Yet, so long as the One Reality passes our thought, because thought invariably analyzes being into subject and predicate (as Plotinus long ago showed), we must not speak of It at all, or be content to give It in terms of that which we expressly say It is not. Nor is such language improper. Even if we are to realize in "ecstasy" the nature of this "Reality," we shall have to pass beyond thought through some such inadequate self-contradictory thought of the Unthinkable.

Whitman in his prefaces to *Leaves of Grass* for

1855 to 1872 and 1876 fully enough expounds his ideas on the subject of the poet and his office, and the aims of his own performance. To give a provisional body to the Spirit of religion until it be incarnate fully in men and women—readers of such poetry—is the highest duty of the poet. (Cf. Pr. 272-279.)

It was originally my intention, after chanting in "Leaves of Grass," the songs of the body and existence, to then compose a further equally needed volume, based on those convictions of perpetuity and conservation which, enveloping all precedents, *make the unseen soul govern absolutely at the last*. I meant while in a sort continuing the theme of my first chants, to shift the slides and exhibit the problem and paradox of the same ardent and fully appointed personality entering the sphere of the resistless gravitation of spiritual law, and with cheerful face estimating death, not at all as the cessation, but as somehow what I feel it must be, the entrance upon by far the greatest part of existence, and something that life is at least as much for as it is for itself. But the full construction of such a work is beyond my powers, and must remain for some bard in the future. *The physical and the sensuous, in themselves or their immediate continuations, retain holds upon me which I think are never entirely released; and those holds I have not only not denied, but hardly wish to weaken.* (Pr., p. 281; Cf. footnote, Pr., p. 284.)

This paragraph I transcribe, because it ought to prevent us seeking in Whitman's work what he does not profess to furnish. The highest rapture which he conceives possible is denied him. Greater poets and prophets are to come than those that have been. In the domain of the very highest, he feels his unfitness for a sufficiently bold flight.

Over the mountain growths—disease and sorrow,—
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory. (p. 182.)

"A soul-sight of that divine clue" (Pr., p. 174) is vouchsafed him, "a guiding thread so fine along the mighty labyrinth." It is "belief in the plan" of God, "inclosed in time and space—health, peace, salvation universal." (p. 182.) You may retort: "This is vague." Nevertheless, Whitman may be right when he says: "The faintest indication is the indication of the best,—and then, becomes the clearest indication." (Pr., p. 267.)

Is it a dream?

Nay, but the lack of it the dream,

And failing it, life's lore and wealth a dream,

And all the world a dream. (p. 183.)

If, in the superb "Song of the Universal," he is breathless with the burden of the Spirit of God, in the allegory of "the Passage to India," which he expressly declares to be a sort of last word (Pr., footnote, p. 280), he makes his intentions clear enough:

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,

At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,

But that I, turning, call to thee, O Soul, thou actual Me,

And lo, thou gently masterest orbs,

Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,

And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space. (p. 321.)

If the strain is great, it is because there is no effort to hide behind words or rites:

Ah more than any priest O Soul, we too believe in God,

But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,

I and my soul to range in range of Thee. (p. 321.)

I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own. (p. 32.)

Reckoning ahead O Soul, when thou, the time achieved,

The seas all crossed, weathered the capes, the voyage done,

Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attained,

As, filled with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,

The Younger melts in fondness in his arms. (p. 322.)

More definite utterance it was impossible for Whitman to give his thought. (So long as there is consciousness of God as separate and distinct, communion is not entire; when it is entire, self merges with Self, the younger brother and the Elder Brother pass away, and the One alone is.)

3. WORSHIP.

In the close of the magnificent poem just quoted from, Whitman describes the Absolute as the "you" of waters, woods, mountains, prairies, clouds, suns and stars. Idolatry is always the refuge of wing-weary aspirants.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
The great Comerado, the lover true for whom I pine, will be
there. (p. 73.)

Then why strive to anticipate? Visions of Him would be premature, and, maybe, if over-distinct, injurious to progress in the Soul's consolidation for an eternal identity aware of itself in God. Let symbols suffice for the present! His "Gods" are various names of the One. (p. 213.) The divine Lover, the Ideal Man, Death, the Best Idea, historic heroisms, Time, Space, the Earth, the Sun, the Stars. But of such Gods, or symbols of God, there is none "more divine than yourself." (p. 299.) None more than the "other gods, these men and women I love." (p. 375.) Besides, it is clear, no symbol is so significant as one's own being if "nothing is greater to one than one's self is" (p. 76), particularly if the thought of God as other than the Reality of you, is the thought of something beyond knowledge and intuition. "The

unseen is proved by the seen" (p. 31), and the body is symbol of the soul. It is so much of the soul as we perceive through the senses. Therefore, if you persist in asking what he worships, he answers:

If I worship one thing *more than another*, it shall be the spread of my own body; (p. 49.)

and he will not shrink from a complete delight in it—that most eloquent word, if "things" be indeed as Whitman conceives, "words of God." (Cf. p. 176.)

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,
Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy. (p. 49.)
Nor is this worship of the body so alien to his main purpose as it might seem. It is not mere defiance. If true worship of the Divine is to make the self realize its dignity as that which proceeds from It, expresses It, goes to It; and if the body is for us, most of the time, the hieroglyph for self and soul; it is of paramount importance to realize the greatness, the beauty, the sacred nature of the body. "Temple of the Holy Ghost" we have been taught to call it, but thanks to a strange eclipse of much of its glory by conventional clothes, we shrink unconsciously from representing ourselves the whole, sound, perfectly developed body as athrill with God. Yet, "If any *thing* is sacred, the human body is sacred." (p. 86.) And Whitman means to rescue for himself his entire body from any indignities placed upon it in ages of ignorance or impiety. "The expression of a well made man appears not only in his face." (p. 81.) "In any man or woman, a clean, strong, firm-fibered body is more beautiful than the most beautiful face." (p. 86.)

Who will venture to praise the folds of drapery

as more graceful and modest than the play of muscle and sinew? Not alone the marbles of ancient Greece shall have the right to a glorious nudity. In his Prose we are supplied with a complete commentary on this, to many adverse critics, the most objectionable part of Whitman's work.

Sweet, sane, still Nakedness in Nature!—ah, if poor, sick, purient humanity in cities might really know you once more! Is not nakedness then indecent? No, not inherently. It is your thought, your sophistication, your fear, your respectability, that is indecent. There come moods when these clothes of ours are not only too irksome to wear, but are themselves indecent. (p. 104.)

An entire essay in his Collect is devoted to this subject and makes his position at all events quite intelligible. (Pr., p. 302–306.) “To the pure all things,” of course, “are pure,” and when God made man he ventured to think his work all “very good.” The poet surely has a right to adopt God's point of view, and if he does not, who shall?

I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who shall be complete,
The earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who remains jagged and broken. (p. 179.)

Old as the world is and beyond statement as are the countless and splendid results of its culture and evolution, perhaps the best, and earliest, and purest intuitions of the human race have yet to be developed. (Pr. p. 306.)

These rudimentary convictions it is the poet's special business to bring into full consciousness. The bird is not only singing for his mate, but also for the eggs she covers with ruffled feathers. (p. 24.) One of those rudimentary convictions is the sacredness of the unadorned body. Still why,

“If I worship one thing *more* than another”

must it be the body? Because it is the one *thing* that is really mine, the worship of which exalts me, and implies a worship still more devout of that which can not be called a "thing," namely, "Me," who dwell in it.

But there are doubtless some who do not yet understand. They will urge: "Is there no greater body than your body? Is there no greater soul than your soul? Why not prefer to worship an Apollo Belvedere? Why not bow, if bow you must, to the soul of Plato? Surely here are more adequate symbols—better idols!" Whitman would answer:

After all these are only to me ideas. If that which these ideas connote be greater in fact to another impartial person than my body and my soul, which are to him also mere ideas, they are not so to me. For him they are comparable. For me they are not. My body is something more to me than the best idea of a body. My soul is something more to me than the loftiest notion I can form of a soul. Even could I institute a comparison and realize the superiority, I should not on that account necessarily prefer Apollo and Plato as symbols of the Divine. "The seed perfection" nestles safely inclosed in every being (p. 181), and after all "size is only development." (p. 45.) "Any thing is but a part." (p. 73.) Only the whole is *really* divine. Each thing in its place is equally fit as symbol of that whole.

I do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else. (p. 38.)

I do not call one greater and one smaller,

That which fills its period and place is equal to any. (p. 71.)

Each of us inevitable,

Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth,

Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth,

Each of us here as divinely as any is here. (p. 119.)

After all, when we look out upon the world, it is a fact that all lines converge to the eye. You may deplore this if you choose. You may argue from the fact that others perceive the same phenomenon, that it is an evident illusion. Yet, as long as you wish to paint this world, you will have to accept this optic egotism as a fundamental fact of *our* world. Else what you paint will be untrue to the only experience we have of the landscape.

Have you thought there could be but a single supreme?

There can be any number of supremes—one does not countervail another any more than one eyesight countervails another, or one life countervails another.

All is eligible to all,

All is for individuals, all is for you,

No condition is prohibited, not God's or any.

All comes by the body, only health puts one rapport with the universe. (p. 264.)

If this egotism be charged against us as crime, we can but say :

The universe is duly in order; every thing is in its place.

—(p. 331.)

and clearly,

I stand in my place with my own day here. (p. 20.)

If the past and its names interests me, how much more would this my present and I interest the men of old ?

I sat studying at the feet of the great masters.

Now, if eligible, O that the great masters might return and study me. (p. 20.)

I know that the past was great and the future will be great,
And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present time.
—(p. 193.)

As the corpse was fittest for its days, the heir is
fittest now for his. (p. 266.) Let me “exalt the present
and the real.” (p. 162.)

Immense have been the preparations for me . . .
All forces have been steadily employed to complete and de-
light me.
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul. (p. 72.)

In literature, we may have supposed we could
avoid this egocentric perspective. Thought we fancied
is impersonal. But only the infinite circle has no
center—or has its center every-where, which amounts
to the same—and the mind can not inclose the in-
finite. It can “drown itself” in such a thought as
Leopardi so well put it. If the soul is to realize its
thought, set its affections upon it, make of the idea
an ideal, the radius must be finite, and then, of course,
every thing once more groups itself about you. As
Whitman expressed it, “even for the treatment of
the universal, in politics, metaphysics, or any thing,
sooner or later we come down to one single, solitary
soul.” (Pr., p. 229.) To give full expression to this
truth was the “Song of Myself” written.

Where I am . . . there is the center of all, there is the mean-
ing of all. (p. 193.)

The true nature of things I do not penetrate.
Nothing is transparent.

We fathom you not, we love you. . . .
You furnish your parts toward the soul. (p. 134.)

Things are “only inaudable words.” (p. 176.)
They “express me better than I can express myself.”

(p. 122.) The whole world-show is but "myself disintegrated" (p. 129); a spectrum, analysis, so to speak, of my soul. If I wish to contemplate myself, I must "absorb all" the sights of the cities "to myself." (p. 38.) They

Tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,
And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,
And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

—(p. 41.)

All the "shows of Day and Night," "I absorb all in myself, and become master myself." (p. 275.) All history "tastes good and becomes mine." (p. 59.) Even the civil war of the early sixties serves me best by illustrating the "vehement struggle . . . for unity in one's self." (p. 373.)

Apart from my view of them, "solid things" only "stand for realities." In that sense, too, they are words—not merely mirrors of myself.

Have you ever reckoned that the landscape took substance and form that it might be painted in a picture? (p. 172.)

Things, however, while not transparent, are at least dimly translucent, and the Real, that filters through them, if it be the same Real that shines through me, I may well call it by the same name. I have then a right—a reasonable right—to identify myself with things, not merely with my sensations and notions of them, but with what they are.

Underneath all to me is myself, to you yourself. (p. 274.)

One's self must never give way—that is the final substance that out of all is sure. . . .

When shows break up, what but One's Self is sure? (p. 342.)

The proper use of things, then, to which the poet (and according to Whitman he is every man) is bound

to be "faithful" (p. 271) is to "enter by them to an area" fit for the self's "dwelling" (p. 47), "taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them." (p. 197.) For the business of the soul is growth—growth from within. My business is but to "extricate" myself out of myself. (p. 351.)

My real self has yet to come forth,
It shall yet march forth o'ermastering, till all lies beneath me,
It shall yet stand up the soldier of ultimate victory. (p. 364.)

If for this I need the outer world of symbol why
expend energy on seeking the rare and extraordinary?

You surely come back at last,
In things best known to you finding the best. (p. 175.)

Because after all

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me,
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will,
Scattering it freely, forever. (p. 39.)

Rare and extraordinary things indeed might overawe me, I might forget that I was really master. In the magnitude and novelty of my experience, perhaps, some rival to my soul would lurk. My ideal is not Nelson, then, or Socrates, or Newton, or any greater name of saint or god, but myself, endowed with their perfections. Let us openly avow this to our souls; repeat it again and again till we are in no danger of deceiving ourselves at any time on this subject. Let us not pretend to see otherwise than our eyes permit. Let us wait to speak impersonally till we have passed to a higher plane of consciousness, that shall be impersonal. Let us boldly paint all our ideal pictures with the lines converging with "reference to the soul" (p. 351) for me, mine, for you, yours.

Such is the substance of Whitman's teaching. Not only is all knowledge of ours subjective, but (clear to the eye of faith) the real Object is identical with the real Subject, so that the terms "I" and "It," "One's Self" and "God" are convertible.

4. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

It becomes incumbent on us now to investigate the practical corollaries of the propositions philosophic and theological which we have hitherto considered.

It is with some hesitation indeed that I approach this part of my exposition, as it will be far less easy than elsewhere to make Walt. Whitman speak for himself, and in speaking for him there is liable to enter a hardly calculable personal factor. All the guidance we have is in the hypothesis that his own unexpressed view reconciled all his self-contradictions and paradoxes. For is there not in the very tone of the already quoted lines, "Very well, then, I contradict myself," something which might suggest rather a concession for argument's sake than an actual plea of guilty to any charge of reckless inconsistency? If evil is declared at one time non-existent, at another time part of the Divine, evil must bear two senses, or we should have to conclude that the Divine itself is non-existent. The tangle is by no means easy for the reader of Whitman to ravel. But the critic is obliged to attempt this. We might, perhaps, out of sheer despair, have set the whole matter of morality aside, as we do with Keats' poetry, were it not that Whitman so clearly in his prose arrogates for himself a moral purpose. He tells us that "all great art must have an ethic purpose." (Pr., p. 188.) To be sure,

he warns us in his preface of 1885 that "the greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals, he knows the soul." (Pr., p. 267.) But as long as Religion and Ethics are inseparable (works being the fruit of a living flower of faith), and that he boldly claims to "inaugurate a religion," one can not evade the question altogether. It is interesting also to note by the way Whitman's criticism of J. F. Millet's picture, which may have suggested to Mr. Havelock Ellis his helpful comparison of Whitman and Millet.*

Besides this masterpiece ("The First Sower") there were many others, (I shall never forget the simple evening scene, "Watering the Cow,"), all inimitable, all perfect as pictures, works of mere art; and then it seemed to me, with that last *impalpable ethic purpose* from the artist (most likely unconscious to himself) *which I am always looking for.* (Pr., p. 181.)

But that Whitman was not indifferent as to the moral effect of his work, is put beyond all dispute by the note to his Preface of 1876, a paragraph of which shall be quoted:

Since I have been ill (1873-74-75), mostly without serious pain, and with plenty of time and frequent inclination to judge my poems (never composed with an eye on the book market, nor for fame, nor for any pecuniary profit), I have felt temporary depression more than once, for fear that in "Leaves of Grass" the *moral* parts were not sufficiently pronounced. But in my clearest and calmest moods I have realized that as those "Leaves," all and several, surely prepare a way for and necessitate morals, and are adjusted to them, just the same as nature does and is, they are what, consistently with my plan they must and probably should be. (In a certain sense, while the Moral is the purport and last intelligence of all Nature, there is absolutely nothing of the moral in the works, or laws, or shows of Nature. Those only lead inevitably to it—begin and necessitate it.) (Pr., p. 284.)

* The New Spirit, by Havelock Ellis. Walter Scott. London, pages 104-107, a very suggestive little volume of essays.

According to Whitman's own judgment, it will be impossible to extract a little treatise on morals, and difficult to obtain a systematic solution of the problem of evil, from his poems.

There are those who nowadays venture to claim that without evil there can be for man no good. Therefore, as they would perpetuate the consciously moral in man, they find themselves obliged to contemplate an eternity of evil, at least of a subjective sort. There must always remain in the mind, even should it pass out of the being, that which is different from good, if there is to be consciousness of good! There must always remain in the world of experience the painful, obstructive, and dangerous, in order that there may be opportunity for the display of will! To this view Whitman does not seem to accord much sympathy. I suppose he would have argued that it was, in the first place, not at all necessary that we should remain consciously moral.

I give nothing as duties,
What others give as duties, I give as living impulses,
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?) (p. 190.)

If the figure is to be taken strictly, he would rather have morality relegated to the subconscious sphere of life. Perfect health involves oblivion of the body as a functioning organism. The soul, when complete in ideal efficiency, knows of no obligation, the "ought" having become the "is." For any thing that looks like dualism, we have a sharp reproof. It is puerile, and absurd:—

Silent and amazed even when a little boy,
I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put God in his
statements

As contending against some being or influence. (p. 217.)*

He sets down his disagreement with such views as I have occasionally heard ascribed to him by apparently conscientious readers of "Leaves of Grass," and which have been stated above.

Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is
good steadily hastening toward immortality,
And the vast all that is called Evil I saw hastening to merge
itself and become lost and dead. (p. 216.)

Only the good is universal. (p. 181.)

Whitman summarizes with evident approval what he believes to be the views of Hegel on this subject:—

The specious, the unjust, the cruel, and what is called the unnatural, though not only permitted in a certain sense (like shade to light), inevitable in the divine scheme, are by the whole constitution of that scheme, partial, inconsistent, temporary, and though having ever so great an ostensible majority, are certainly destined to failure, after causing much suffering. (Pr., p. 176.)

To mere "optimism," explaining "only the surface and fringe" (Pr., p. 174), he has no leaning. He desires always to see things as they really seem to the eye. The "divine cue," of which he claims a "soul sight," is the thought that "the whole congeries of things" is "like a leashed dog in the hand of the hunter" (Pr., p. 174); "that there is central and never broken unity" and one "consistent and eternal purpose." (Pr., p. 176.) The notion that there is any thing inherently evil or foul in the universe seems to him "to impugn Creation" (Pr., p. 306), God "seeing no evil" in it. (*Cf.* Hab. i, 13.) When he tells us that

* *Cf.* Pr., p. 270.

The difference between sin and goodness is no delusion, (p. 335.)
 he must doubtless have in mind a conception somewhat akin to this of Browning:

The evil is null, is naught, is silence, implying sound;
 What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more.
 —(Abt. Vogeler. St. IX, l. 6.)

Growth from good to better is quite sufficient to allow of the full exercise of the will. Evil thus becomes merely the name of a good that has been transcended.

The soul is always beautiful, it appears more or it appears less,
 it comes or it lags behind. (p. 331.)

Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place is bad.

—(p. 269.)

The universe is duly in order, every thing is in its place. (p. 331.)

By this is meant, then, that, while in the universe absolute law and order obtains, and the whole therefore is good, yet the individual can occupy divers places in this whole, and if it prefer to occupy a lower one than it might occupy, embodied as it now is, it is bad with reference to its possibilities—it has yet to grow.

The fundamental difficulty about this evolutionary conception of "Evil" as propounded by some oriental theosophies would seem to lie in the postulation of a universe infinite and perfect, giving their strict sense to these words infinite and perfect. To speak of progress with reference to a whole, felt to be thus infinite and perfect, is sufficiently meaningless. And if the whole can not be conceived as growing, because already all that it can be, and yet each portion of it grows, we are confronted with a serious problem indeed. One solution immediately offers itself, which, while it would serve to account for our experiences

of incorrigible wrong-doing,* is hardly satisfactory to our moral or æsthetic sense, namely :—that retrogression in some exactly balances progression in others, so that the whole remains in stable equilibrium perpetually self-identical. But the thought of such a universe is a horrible purposeless swirl and monstrous unrest, sickening the soul with the very prospect of its own imperishable existence. And then to tell us, by way of consolation, as some would, that such is the universe, to be sure, but that an escape is provided for any soul out of this fiery “wheel of Nature”† upon definite conditions into what is to us now as yet non-being; and that though souls are thus constantly passing out,—becoming “extinct,” indeed, so far as such poor living as this can be dignified by the name of life,—nevertheless the number that keep up the universal swirl of being, never suffers diminution on that account, because originally infinite; surely this were only to pile paradox on paradox, to answer a question by a harder question, to satisfy the spiritual cravings of man at the expense of accurate thinking.

Perhaps it would be better to recognize that thought can not deal with what has avowedly no limits. The zero and the infinite when they enter our premises vitiate our logic hopelessly, and no conclusion has cogency. Wherefore, if with human faculties even a picturesque solution of the mystery of existence

**Cf.* Clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shames; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (St. Jude xii, 13.)

† St. Jas., iii, 6.

is to be legitimately obtained, one which will afford the mind a rational repose, it would be well not to render at the very start all thought impossible by the quite gratuitous assumption that we are dealing with a literary "infinite" and therefore "perfect" or "finished" universe.

Now, it would scarcely be fair to Whitman to impute to him such views. It suffices him to assert that the universe is as it should be, and is good; that it is adapted to the best advantages of us human souls and our less advanced fellows in animal, vegetable and crystal. The universe baffles our intellectual, moral, and æsthetic faculties of judgment. Therefore we say it is infinite, meaning that its limits are for us undiscoverable; that it is perfect, meaning that the intensity of its goodness and beauty are beyond our sense to endure. He has no cast-iron theory of the Cosmos. He regards even the seas and wind as "too big for formal handling" (Pr., p. 95), and therefore as improper subjects for the poet. The "common soil" itself (Pr., p. 100) escapes artistic grasp. All one can do in attempting a "pen and ink" sketch of it, is to enumerate various sensuous appeals it makes, several phases of its appearance. On this account the "demesne of poetry will always be not the exterior but the interior;" not the macrocosm but the microcosm." (Pr., p. 298.) He "leaves all free" (p. 190), and charges his disciples to do the same.

I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
Breathe the air, but leave plenty after me. (p. 42.)

So far as he can see, "Evolution" will explain every thing. He does not feel himself bound to

reckon over closely with what is beyond his sight, with possible "infinities" and "eternities" of an absolute sort. He enjoys Hegel's glorious philosophic tour-de-force, but he would be the last to pin his faith to Hegel. He insists on "leaving room ahead of himself" (Pr., p. 266), and of us, on what he calls "keeping vista." (p. 268.) Hegel after all is no more than an "indispensable" contributor to the "erudition of America's future," but hardly worth so much as the messages of the old "spiritual poets and poetry of other lands." (Pr., p. 177.) "Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me" (p. 50), would be his defiant reply to urgent invitations of any officious spider of a Metaphysician to come into his gluey net of a parlor, besplangled though it were with the dews of the morning all asparkle in the sun.

But it will save space if I set forth dogmatically, at the risk of a little repetition, what seems to be the solution of the moral tangle in Whitman's poetry. Dogmatism is always a capital yoke-fellow to doubt; it is usually prudent to make up in positiveness for any lack of definite knowledge, as is the custom with not a few!

The word Evil is used by Whitman with five distinct meanings:

(1) Evil may mean the less good as compared to the good, the good as compared to better, the better as compared to best. In this sense "evil" is really "good;" different in degree only, not in kind.

(2) Evil may mean a supposed not-good; as such its existence is denied.

Omnes! Omnes! Let others ignore what they may,
I make the poem of evil also, I commemorate that part also,

I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is—and I say *there is in fact no evil*,
 (Or if there is, I say it is just as important to you, to the land or to me, as any thing else. (p. 22.)

In this passage we clearly see the first two meanings presented together.

(3) Evil may mean failure to develop according to the "inner light" (Pr., p. 465), the "spiritual divine faculty" (Pr., p. 284), "the inward Deity-planted law" (Pr., p. 465), because of an inadequate realization of one's destiny.

On this account, Whitman feels he has contributed a "new religion," and makes the start with the "divine pride" in one's self.

None has ever yet adored and worshiped half enough.
 None has begun to think how divine he himself is and how certain the future. (p. 22.)

Here he strengthens the soul by a recognition of absolute law, to which there are no exceptions. He ridicules "miracles" in that sense. Privileges, too, he will have for none. (p. 48.) Therefore, there can be, of course, no substitutional atonements, no forgiveness. Remorseless law, expiation, and conversion in the strict sense of "turning about," and repentance in the sense of doing better, are with him the great pivotal words of ethics.*

A careful study of his conception of "sceptic" or "infidel" seems to give the word the sense of "a man who does not believe in man (*cf.*, p. 217), and consequently not in his own better self; a man who opposes the champion of liberty, political, social, per-

* These points will be substantiated by quotation later on in this paper.

sonal, who "supposes he triumphs" over principles and causes by crushing those who maintain and espouse them,* when in truth he is crushing himself in them. If a man can not love God unless he love man whom he hath seen, is it not equally true that unless a man believe in men, he never can believe in God? No man who believes in man is an infidel, however much he may think himself one. His emphatic denials are but perverse affirmations.

In such a wondrous world as this, goodness and faith in self can not seem strange :

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear, it would not amaze me. (p. 123.)

The wonder is always and always, how there can be a mean man or an infidel. (p. 47.)

It is Whitman's special mission to "confound" wholly the "skeptic" "with the hush of his lips." (p. 50.) And surely no poet has held up to the man who has disbelieved in himself a more terrible "hand-mirror" than he. He shows the "infidel" (*i. e.*, the unbeliever in Whitman's religion) that he has become a slave—that his body publishes it abroad—and he cries out in a sympathetic despair for the man :

Such a result so soon, and from such a beginning! (p. 213.)

(4) But evil may not mean failure to develop courageously from within, though such "evil" is the only evil there can be that is deplorable.

The true poet is "master of obedience." (p. 273, *cf.* Pr., p. 264.) The states must "obey little" and "resist much." (p. 15.) Men and women are to

* *Cf.* "But for all this liberty, has not some out of place nor the infidel entered into full possession." (p. 287.)

“think lightly of the laws” as such. (p. 152.) Whitman goes so far as to “beat the gong of revolt.” (p. 48.) His words are “reminders” of “life,” “freedom,” “extrication.” (p. 48.) He is “really” “neither for nor against institutions” (p. 107), but he is for the soul. Now, if the soul did not refuse to be shaped from without, it could never develop from within. Rebellion against conventions, laws, decorums, any exterior efforts to reform or improve, must be. It is perfectly clear that if the “Holy Spirit” (interior Energy) is to work according to its own vital individual methods in the world of universal Law (of the “Father”), there needs to be in man “Satan,” which is revolt not against the true “Father” from whom the “Holy Spirit” derives (who dictates to the individual his true development in perfect harmony with his world), but against a false “Law” of outside imposition; against also that very “Father” misconceived as external to the soul, for

The soul has that measureless pride which revolts from every lesson but its own. (p. 291.)

The Savior the “mightier God” (p. 339), the “beautiful, gentle God” (p. 58), the “beautiful God the Christ” (p. 113), is he who manifested as sympathy and love, makes men aware of God the Holy Ghost,* and so may be said to “send” Him to them, who in his turn enlightening them “leads into all truth,” so that “Satan” “falls from heaven,” being no longer a god (*i. e.*, a good) to man, as man be-

* Is the “Holy Ghost” or “Inner Light” to be considered synonymous with “Conscience?” (Cf. Pr., pp. 284, 465.)

comes "one with the Father" through the "mediation of the Son."

Such would seem to be the meaning of the "Square Deific" (p. 339), which for years refused to yield up its secret, because I was unable to see that with Whitman the "quaternary" that takes the place of the orthodox Christian Trinity represents in its manifoldness a process, not a being. The true God is not many, but One. When known as One Being, he is known as Self, and all differences and distinctions in the Deity necessarily efface themselves in rapturous ecstasy. If this doctrine, novel and strange, be a first installment of the new theology (Pr., p. 278), the more splendid theology (Pr., p. 286) which according to Whitman is fast coming, there are those who will feel somewhat alarmed. But, for their comfort, let me state that Whitman claims no infallible popes, councils, or churches for his dogma. He thinks the "New Theology" will not be "settled" quite "in a year nor even a century!" (Pr., p. 286.)

In the sense, then, of "Satan," evil is provisionally good. It is energy turned outward in self-defense, instead of being engaged at its normal work of building up the organism.*

(5) Evil may finally mean pain, defeat, age, death, the so-called ills which "flesh is heir to."

In this sense, Whitman denies that evil is to be deplored. Quotations might easily be multiplied indefinitely. "The soul forever and forever" (p. 21), and it would seem the soul is never more distinctly

* Compare with the "Chanting the Square Deific" the "Rounded Catalogue Divine Complete." (p. 419.)

self-conscious as master, than when it is confronted by a hostile environment. The whole of heroism and greatness is this attitude of defiance and denial. From the "Song of Joys," these lines are to the point:

O to struggle against great odds, to meet enemies undaunted!
 To be entirely alone with them, *to find how much one can stand!*
 To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, face to face!
 To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of guns with
 perfect nonchalance!
To be indeed a God! (p. 148.)

Defeat is as glorious as victory. The true guage of success is soul-growth.

"Battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won." (p. 43.) All "overcome heroes" are to be cheered:

Did we think victory great?
 So it is—but now it seems to me, when it can not be helped, that
 defeat is great,
 And that death and dismay are great. (p. 288.)

Old age is met with the same spirit:

Sublime old age of manhood or womanhood,
 Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty breadth of the
 universe,
 Old age, flowing free with the delicious nearby freedom of death.
 —(p. 126.)

O the old manhood of me, my noblest joy of all!
 My children and grandchildren, my white hair and beard,
 My largeness, calmness, majesty out of the long stretch of my
 life. (p. 145.)

Women sit or move to and fro, some old, some young,
 The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than the
 young. (p. 217.)

No poet has sung old age more sublimely; his own in the gem entitled "Halcyon Days" (p. 388); old age and youth contrasted in "Youth, Day, Old Age and Night" (p. 180); the old man in st. 3. of "I sing the

body Electric." (p. 82.) "The ideal woman; practical, spiritual," in "As at thy portals also death" (p. 376); st. 11 of "Song of the Broad Axe" (p. 157); in the surpassingly beautiful st. 5 of "From Noon to Starry Night." (p. 355.) Death the "great sea" to which old age is the enlarging "estuary" "grandly spreading itself" is glorified. (p. 218.)

It may be that Walt. Whitman has not treated this theme adequately. Certainly he has treated it as no one before him. There is nothing of Leopardi's courting of death because life is evil. It is just because life is good that he is led to believe "death"—the unknown life—still better. It is "just as lucky to die" as "to be born." (p. 34.) "What will be will be well, for what is is well." (p. 335.) Of death as immortality it is not yet time for us to treat.

If now pain, defeat, age, death, turn out to be no evils at all, what, then, is evil? Let us summarize the last few paragraphs:

Evil (1) = the less good:—essentially good; only relatively speaking not good.

(2) = the not good:—non-existent.

(3) = failure to develop from within:—the lack of good.

(4) = revolt against external laws:—a temporary good.

(5) = pain, defeat, old age, death:—opportunities for good, all good.

Of these, then, the only evil to be feared is the third, and that is the want of good, deficiency, failure to develop latent possibilities, sloth of soul; all which is not something self-existent, eternally opposed to good.

5. SALVATION AND THE SAVIOR.

The quality of BEING in the object's self, according to its own central idea and purpose, and of growing therefrom and thereto—

not criticism by other standards and adjustments thereto—is the lesson of Nature. (Pr., p. 230.)

It is in this thought of evolution from within, of the vital guide at the heart, all else with reference to the individual thing tending to assist in its self-fulfillment, that Whitman finds his moral principle.

The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You. (p. 273.)

All parts away for the progress of souls. (p. 127.)

Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent. (p. 46.)

I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait. (p. 32.)

The soul is . . . real,

No reasoning, no proof has established it,

Undeniable growth has established it. (p. 180.)

So far as we can see, growth is for growth's sake,—for growth is but “being”—nor can we push forward to a farther conception.

Have the past struggles succeeded? . . .

Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.
—(p. 128.)

I said to my spirit: “When we become the enfolders of those orbs and the pleasure and knowledge of every thing in them, shall we be filled and satisfied then?”

And my spirit said: “No; we but level that lift, to pass and continue beyond.” (p. 74.)

The law of promotion and transformation can not be eluded.

—(p. 336.)

If you want a substantial conception rather than the formal one of “growth,” he will suggest as synonym “eternal life.” Does that need emotive qualification? If so, he can afford to give it the familiar name “happiness.” (p. 78.) For to him, “the efflux of the soul is happiness.” (p. 124.) The drift of

things is indefinable—"it is grand" and "it is happiness." (p. 171.) The "core of life" is "happiness." (p. 300.) Hence, a man needs to wait for no one and no thing to be complete. To be is to grow. To grow is eternal life. Eternal life is happiness.

All triumphs and glories are complete in themselves, to lead onward. (p. 373.)

No stopping place is thought of—the end being beyond thought. Our last thought is *progress beyond thought*. From this we can readily make clear to ourselves why Walt Whitman is so strong in his rejection of asceticism. Every natural function is pure and good. There is no merit in mutilation. The body and its needs are to be revered:

I believe in the flesh and the appetites. (p. 49.)

He is ambitious in his writings to

permit to speak at every hazard

Nature without check, with original energy. (p. 29.)

It is not too much life we have, but too little. Asceticism were the proper theory if any part of us could under any circumstances be overdeveloped. What seems overdevelopment of one, is really underdevelopment of some other, organ or function. What we need, then, is not repression, but right stimulation.

Not that Whitman utterly despises ascetic goodness.* It is good, no doubt, but simply not the best. It is, at all events, narrow, unbeautiful. It has its use as the method for exemplifying singly, certain particular perfections. But the object of nature is the man entire, characterized, like the poetry of the Bible, by "immense sensuousness immensely spiritual." (Pr.

* Note his appreciation of Whittier. (Pr., pp. 181 and 481.)

p. 380.) In complete accord with Obermann, he thinks this result will be attained by remembering "that our best dependence is to be upon humanity itself, and its own inherent, normal, full-grown qualities, without any superstitious support whatever." (Pr., p. 214.)

How such a result is to be attained in particular cases, we are left to infer for ourselves. We have seen he recognizes a "universal will"—the destiny of any and every individual to be perfect. That "will" is, of course, "abyssmic," and enters consciousness as the "conscience." The objects of conscience are seized upon with an enthusiasm which, fortified by a cosmic philosophy of indefinite development for the individual, is a Religion. But, so far as we can tell, Religion subserves a still higher end.

Even in religious fervor there is a touch of animal heat. But moral conscientiousness, crystalline, without flaw, not Godlike only, entirely human, awes and enchants forever. Great is emotional love, even in the order of the rational universe. But, if we must make gradations, I am clear there is something greater. (Pr., p. 248.)

How this object is to be attained—that is, how this religious fervor is to be kindled, and to be in due time transmuted into "something greater"* is made fairly evident. Of course, you can not probe, preach, and persecute any more. If you did, you would only arouse "Satan" in a man.

Underneath Christ the Divine I see,
The dear love of man for his comrade. (p. 102.)

Comerado I give you my hand,
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give myself before preaching or law,
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?
—(p. 129.)

* Emerson's "Celestial Love?"

An invitation of this sort can be accepted by the proudest soul.

Behold I do not give lectures or a little charity,
When I give, I give myself. (p. 66.)

Whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud. (p. 76.)

And with Whitman this is not mere high-sounding hyperbole. Lack of sympathy argues that you have fallen from a consciousness of that Self, which is also your neighbor's.

I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person.

My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

—(p. 60.)

If he finds you depressed he will infuse in you
The joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only the human soul is capable of generating and emitting in steady and limitless floods. (p. 143.)

He knows his own incompleteness. It is relatively just as great as that of the lowest men.

I feel I am of them—I belong to those convicts and prostitutes myself,

And henceforth I will not deny them—for how can I deny myself? (p. 299.)

Does he meet them, his eye, his gesture, his mouth will reassure them :

Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you.

Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you, and the leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to glisten and rustle for you. (p. 299.)

Indeed he will keep his promise and break forth into his glorious hymn, "To You." (p. 186.)

Your *true* soul and body appear before me. . . .

None has understood you, but I understand *you*,

None has done justice to you, you have not done justice to your self,

None but has found you imperfect, I only find no imperfection in *you*,

None but would subordinate you, I only am he who will never consent to subordinate you.

I only am he who places over you no master, owner, better, God, beyond what waits intrinsically in yourself. . . .

You have not known what you are, you have slumbered upon yourself all your life. . . .

The mockeries are not you.

Underneath them and within them I see *you* lurk, . . .

If these conceal you from others they do not conceal you from me. . . .

Whoever you are, claim your own at every hazard. (p. 186-187.)

This is the "new religion," the "greater religion," which yet is not *new*. Behind our most modern philosophy and art is "the same old heart and brain;" the "insight and inspiration of the same old humanity." The "physiognomy" alone can change, thinks Whitman. (*Cf. Pr.*, p. 335.)

However, it is frankly as "Poet" that he sees the "Saviour." In literature is to be the soul of democracy. It is to be a general consciousness. (*Cf. Pr.*, p. 247.) "The Song of the Answerer," "By Blue Ontario's Shore," and "Democratic Vistas" have this thought for burden; and Whitman would contend that after all this notion is confirmed by the history of the greatest teacher of antiquity and the nature of his influence to-day. In the simple home it is Jesus the Poet, the maker of certain beautiful parables, who influences for good. It is his life, itself the poem of poems, which, apart from all theories about his person and his work, touches the souls of men, and infilters itself into their lives. Of course by "literature" we know

just what Whitman means. For him the poet is a "free channel of himself," (Pr., p. 268), giving "things without increase or diminution." "He takes his data from science. (Cf. Pr., p. 269.) His manner is characterized by an "absence of tricks." (Pr., p. 272.) His subject is "not nature, but man." (Pr., p. 298.) He has the "rapt vision" to which the "seen becomes the prophecy of the unseen" (Pr., p. 299); he is the complete lover of the universe," "leaving room ahead of himself" (Pr., p. 266), and he treats even the universal from no fictitious point of view, but from that which he actually occupies. (Pr., p. 229.) He himself illustrates his doctrine for he is

The glory and extract thus far of things and of the human race. (p. 137.)

"Leaves of Grass" also, since "personal force is behind every thing" (p. 435), presents us a "Person;" (p. 438) and so, for the true "Answerer" "the Maker of poems," who "settles justice, reality, immortality" (p. 137), he "gives us himself" after all (p. 66), having, as he admits, unconsciously taken upon himself to be *an Answerer*.

6. IMMORTALITY.

Let us now turn our attention to the doctrine of immortality as it was conceived by Walt Whitman. In this region especially are his theological exotics exuberant. His doctrine of the divine Self has a latent strain of oriental mysticism. In his dealing, however, with life, death, and immortality—the progress of that divine Self beyond these known conditions—he orientalizes, if possible, yet more decidedly. And as he laid great stress on "what" a man or a nation "thinks

of death" because in his opinion the "idea of immortality, above all other ideas," is to "give crowning religious stamp to democracy in the new world" (Pr., p. 281), it is incumbent upon every sympathetic student to ascertain just what Whitman himself thought likely to be the form of the doctrine suited to modern times. Here, too, I conceive, it is not my duty to criticise but to present. Strictures are always an inviting field for the flying of rhetorical kites. All you can learn from them, though, is how the wind of prejudice is blowing for him who holds the strings. I venture to think a painstaking mosaic of Whitman's chief utterances will serve the reader better than some gratuitous observations of the present writer on the damnable wickedness of heresy! Let it be clearly understood, however, that there is nothing willful and capricious in Whitman's adoption of views on these subjects unusual to us of the West. Indeed, his doctrines,* though often undoubtedly coincident with oriental theories are developed for very different reasons. They originate with him in his passion for an ideal democracy, an ultimate divine City of Friends, where there will be no occasion for the preference of one to another, because all are positively equal.

Much as Whitman believes in "love" he never could adopt it as a provisional solution of the problem of divine justice. He never cared to believe that "stars differ from one another in glory." (1 Cor.

* See footnote of this essay at the end of Section 8 (p. 314) for corroborative evidence on Whitman's independent development of those ideas concerning which the suspicion of direct derivation from oriental theosophies is most plausible.

xv, 41.) Such a doctrine seemed to him a projection of arbitrary social distinction into the sphere of eternity. He could not believe in a cosmic partiality. All must have had the same beginning. All must end in the same perfection. The different degrees of natural endowment can not of course be chance; if they can not be ascribed to divine caprice, after the Calvinistic fashion, there is only room left for the thought that the physical and spiritual capital with which we start here is what we have earned according to universal law in an eternal pre-existence. The differences to us, which make the doctrine of "equality" incredible, and that of "fraternity" therefore difficult of reduction to practice, are only a matter of relative speed. God fixes the beginning and the end—nay, is the beginning and the end. He gives us indefinite time, and leaves us free to choose our route. We can travel in a straight line, or in vast spirals, or in fantastic loops and labyrinthine tangles. But the end, "the seed perfection," was within the "first huge nothing" (p. 71), and is to the open spiritual eye so distinctly visible as to make even now the democratic faith a beautiful certainty.

The thought of the family in which each rejoices that he is really surpassed by some brother or sister; the delight of self-subordination to those we love; the keen selfless enjoyment, in sympathy, of the greatness that is greater than any we shall ever attain; the delicious attribution of our greatness to those less great, not as ours, but as a revelation of His who is their Father and ours; a communion of reciprocal aspiration and inspiration up a vast stairway of grades of being, one current of holy Love,

and beatific selflessness running up and down the chain of joined hands: (God Himself the unity of this eternal diversity—the white light in which the several rays are absorbed, lost to vision, though still continuous distinct elements of its manifold whole): such symbol ideas of the life beyond were apparently incompatible with a thorough belief in democracy, according to Whitman. It was not for their strangeness' sake that he suggests a Swedenborgian spiritual body, a Hindu metempsychosis, and hints a resolution of all inequality in a "One formed out of all," (p. 21) making the "vast similitude" the night creates to the eye (*cf.* p. 207) or sleep to the mind, significant of the "Truth:"

The antipodes, and every one between this and them in the dark,
I swear they are averaged now—one is no better than the other,
The night and sleep have *likened them and restored them.*

I swear they are beautiful,

Every one that sleeps is beautiful, every thing in the dim light is
beautiful,

The wildest and bloodiest is over, and all is peace.

Peace is always beautiful,

The myth of heaven indicates peace and Night. (pp. 330-1.)

Not, thus, as hitherto customary among us, the day, that distinguishes, but the night that charitably and, one might say, unmorally covers all disparities, and fuses in one tranquil mystery all that is, serves Whitman as symbol of his ultimate Ideal. (*Cf.* Pr., pp. 101, 119, 126; L. of G. 344, 369.)

There never could have been in Whitman any love of exotics as such.

Have you not imported this or the spirit of it in some ship? (p. 271)
is one of his searching questions to the would-be poet of America. For the poet must be original; singers and

rhymers as he calls them, amused with "a prettiness," are not under obligation to create. (*Cf.* p. 272.) But in the poet's work every thing must be native; and the more one ponders over the doctrines of apparently oriental origin, the more one is convinced they are with Whitman developed from within. Transcendental sentiments consistent with a "divine democracy" took speculative formal elements from such eastern doctrines as were suited for wholesome and complete assimilation by them; and with Whitman these sentiments were never allowed to forget their immediate origin:—an unreasoned faith in the unqualified equality and fraternity of man.*

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that. (p. 73.)

Now when the soul is at its highest vital pitch it declares confidently:

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured, and never will be measured. (p. 73.)

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine can not be swept by a carpenter's compass,

* Democracy is to Whitman so wonderful, because it is, as he conceives it, the method of Nature. (Pr., pp. 68–69.) It individualizes and universalizes. (Pr., p. 220.) The individualization is the source itself of sympathy, as a clear self-knowledge implies a knowledge of others. Sympathy universalizes. This sympathy or love he terms adhesiveness. (Pr., foot-note, p. 247.) Poetry is to be the Soul of democracy (Pr., p. 247), in that it is to individualize men, bring them to self-knowledge. It is to be the vehicle of religion. (Pr., pp. 222, 279.) For an understanding of his views on the essence of democracy perhaps the shortest helpful essay is his "Carlyle from an American point of view." (Pr., pp. 170–178.) The three prefaces and "Democratic Vistas" should be read if possible.

I know I shall not pass like a child's earlacue cut with a burnt stick at night,

I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the *amplitude of time*. (p. 45.)

He is not of those who assert that it makes no difference whether or not there be any outlook beyond the laying down of the body:—

Is to-day nothing? is the beginningless past nothing?
If the future is nothing they are just as surely nothing. (p. 333.)
The future is no more uncertain than the present. (p. 151.)

Do you suspect death? If I were to suspect death I should die now,

Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well suited toward annihilation? (p. 337.)

But the fact is he does “walk pleasantly and well suited;” and though he can not cogently reason out to a satisfactory conclusion, he sees in the facts an immortal assurance:

I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen is provided for in the inferences of things. (p. 342.)

Did you think Life was so well provided for, and Death, the purport of all Life, is not well provided for? (p. 342.)

For, apparently, life is for death:

What invigorates life invigorates death; (p. 151.)
so much so that

Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest according.
—(p. 346.)

A thing is never understood but in relation to its origin and end. The mystery of life is not without reason:

O! I see now that life can not exhibit all to me, as the day can not, I see that I am to wait for what will be explained by death.
—(p. 345.)

The question “what is life?” involves the question

"what is death?" The thought that they are one, while it gives us no clearer understanding of life, leaves the soul at all events satisfied. We have seen about us the wonderful play of life. Every spring from "dead clods and chills as from low burial graves," a "thousand forms" rise. "Bloom and growth" imply materials. (p. 399.) In decay Whitman smells "the white roses sweet and scented" and reaches to "leafy lips" and "to the polished breasts of melons." (p. 77.) "What chemistry!" he cries, considering "that all is clean forever and forever," and an ecstasy fills him when he realizes that the earth which

Gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings at last,

Grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,

and in spite of all attempts to pollute, "turns harmless and stainless on its axis." (pp. 286-7.)

Now, a consideration of the destiny of man in the "light of the processes wherein" life "seems" the leaving of many deaths "would lead us up to a doctrine like that of George Eliot's 'Choir Invisible.'" But although (with Whitman), we may believe this to be a doctrine of immortality entirely true so far as it goes, nothing prevents us (with Whitman also) going beyond it to further assertions of the perpetuation of spiritual being, if we are not yet reconciled to death, when told that life is a continual dying. We may admit that the earth is falling to the sun every moment while aware that she is not arriving at her destination very fast. Similarly the bird is sinking earthward, but the libration of his wings is at the same time lifting him heavenward, and so he soars on quietly in the blue serene.

O living always, always dying!
 O the burials of me past and present,
 O me while I stride ahead, material, visible as ever.

—(p. 344.)

That is just it. Our life is a delicate balance in favor of the organism between constructive energies and destructive forces. Face to face with death, indeed, the horrible doubt comes:

Matter is conqueror—matter triumphant, continues forever.

—(p. 341.)

Are souls drowned and destroyed so?

Is only matter triumphant? (p. 345.)

But as a loyal Positivist you cry “No!” Soul triumphs as fully as matter. No form of matter abides. No form of soul does either. A spiritual chemistry analogous to that of the physical world actually perpetuates all that is precious,

And nothing endures but personal qualities. (p. 152.)

If all come to ashes of dung,

If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum! for we are betrayed.

—(p. 337.)

You may say that the martyrs live.

They live in other young men, O Kings,

They live in brothers again to defy you,

They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.

—(p. 212.)

Doubtless this is perfectly reasonable. It is a matter besides not of speculation but of experience, and, as shown by the quotations, Whitman heartily agrees with all this. Not by the elimination of the spiritually weak (as unfit to survive), but rather by the elimination of the spiritually strong (as needing no longer to survive), is virtue in this world increased. For every one true man slain two arise in his place.

Propagation of spiritual qualities is not by physical inheritance, but by moral inoculation. So is

The loftiest of life upheld by death. (p. 366.)

It is a noble thing to sing the song of the old California trees :

Nor yield we mournfully, majestic brothers,
 We who have grandly filled our time ;
 With Nature's calm content, with tacit huge delight,
 We welcome what we wrought for through the past,
 And leave the field for them.
 For them predicted long,
 For a superber race, they too to fill their time,
 For them we abdicate, *in them ourselves* ye forest kings!

—(p. 166-7.)

7. PERSONAL IDENTITY.

But true as all this doubtless is, it is hard to believe that "personal qualities" can only be transferred as flame from torch to torch.

"I swear nothing is good to me that ignores individuals." (p. 341.) And this sort of "qualitative immortality" does absolutely ignore the individual.

"Only what satisfies souls is true." (p. 201.) This Comtist doctrine in and of itself can not satisfy the soul. We do not believe we are "qualities" merely. We know we are substance; whatever that may be, it is what we are. If we were conscious of ourselves as "mere qualities" undoubtedly the propagation of them would be the continuance of our conscious life. Whitman, thinking of the past history of the race, asks significantly:

Are those billions of men really gone ?
 Are those women of the old experience of the earth gone ?
Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us ?
Did they achieve nothing for good for themselves ?

I believe all those men and women . . . every one exists, etc.
—(p. 289.)

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?
They are alive and well somewhere,
The smallest sprout shows *there is really no death*,
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the
end to arrest it,
And ceased the moment life appeared.
All goes onward and onward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed and luckier.
—(p. 34.)

“In fact I know I am deathless” (p. 44) in an individual way.

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is
in me. . . .

I do not know it—it is without name. . . .

It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—

It is eternal life—it is Happiness. (pp. 77-78.)

Then, too, when “I plead” in my heart with the universe “for my brothers and sisters” (p. 78) I can not but remember “the young man” and “the young woman put by his side”—their lives only a beautiful morning; “the little child that peeped in at the door, and then drew back and was never seen again”—a mere false start; “the old man who has lived without purpose,” and now that it is too late, has become aware of it, “and feels it with bitterness worse than gall;” there are the diseased, the degraded, those still half-brutish, those that are “sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in.” (p. 70.) For these he perceives that life as we know it does not provide; they can not be overlooked in the universal providence; that something which provides for them is again Life. Only Life can

complete life. Of this Life, "this heavenly mansion," death is "the opener and usher" (p. 213), to it death is "the exquisite transition." (p. 373.) Love teaches this lesson :

Death, death, death, death, death! (p. 201.)

and the "vast heart, like a planet's chained and chaffing" of the moonlit sea—telling its "tale of cosmic elemental passion" (p. 392) utters also :

The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word. . . . (p. 201.)

But not in grief only is this felt to be love's natural lesson :

For how calm, how solemn it grows to ascend to the atmosphere of lovers.

Death or life—I am then indifferent, my soul declines to prefer.
(I am not sure but the high soul of lovers welcomes death most.)
—(p. 96.)

. . . You are folded inseparably, you, love and death are.
Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I was calling
life,

For now it is conveyed to me that you are the purports essential,
That you abide in those shifting forms of life, for reasons, and
that they are mainly for you,
That you beyond them come forth to remain the real reality.
—(p. 97.)

The great intellectual insights into life, as loudly and clearly as love does, speak of death.

I foresee too much, it means more than I thought,
It appears to me I am dying. (p. 381.)

Indeed, "Fancy," to which at death the poet says farewell, may be but another name for it.

May be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs.
—(p. 422.)

therefore, "retaining" his "heart's and soul's un-

mitigated faith" up "to the last" (Pr., p. 520) the dying poet cries :

Good-bye—and *hail!* my Fancy! (p. 422.)

It is not mere despair of this life; it is life at its height that promises continuance and completion. It is sympathy, love, it is transcendent moments of vital vision, it is flashes of spiritual illumination, it is this all which urges the soul to say deliberately aloud :

I do not think life provides for all, and for time and space, but I believe Heavenly Death provides for all. (p. 342.)

Death of earth is birth of heaven. How does the soul know this? How can you be sure you should call it "heavenly?" May it not indeed be "hellish?" If justice is not fully shown us here and now, may not a monster Injustice, naked, bloodsmeared, eyes lurid in the dark—savage tooth and claw eager to rend us—hold despotic sway in those realms unknown? To this Whitman can only answer that he has not found a lack of justice here. "What is" is well with reference to what was. "What will be will be well" therefore with reference to "what is." (p. 335.) "The law of promotion and transformation can not be eluded." (p. 336.) There is no evil at all in this our experience of life but what amounts to a "lagging in the race," and that will be set right by indefinite time.

I do not know what is untried and afterward,
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient and can not fail.
—(p. 70.)

Whither I walk I can not define, but I know it is good,
The whole universe indicates that it is good,
The past and the present indicate that it is good. (p. 337.)

Therefore, he can invoke death with a gentle song (p. 346) as though singing his own painless birth, or soothing his past to sleep awhile in the gentle cradle of the grave.

But once grant this indestructible identity throughout change to man, why should it be denied to animals and trees? Why, the very thought of fixed species is odious.* Nothing ought to be arbitrarily fixed forever. "Every thing" for Whitman "has an eternal soul."

The trees have rooted in the ground! the weeds of the sea have!
the animals! (p. 337.)

The soul "receives identity through materials." (p. 146.) It built up out of these a body, and so the soul "received identity by its body."

That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew
I should be of my body. (p. 131.)

This body was "born" of its "mother" to
"identify" the soul. (p. 335.)

The known life, the transient,
Is to form and decide identity for the unknown life, the permanent.
—(p. 337.)

The world about it "leads" the soul to "identity" and "body" (p. 349) and offers it further:

The temporary use of materials for *identity's* sake; (p. 374.)
and finally, "there is nothing but immortality."
(p. 337.)

All is preparation for it—and identity is for it. (Id.)

* "On the Origin of Species, etc.," 1859, "The Descent of Man, etc.," 1871, Whitman, as Goethe (Wordsworth on one occasion) and Browning must be credited with a thorough grasp of the idea of universal evolution before the epoch making books of Darwin were composed.

But if "identity" always implies "body" and the "corpse" we will leave will be but "excrementitious," (p. 344)—indeed, "for reasons" it is "myself" who "discharge my excrementitious body" (p. 147)—there must be a "real body doubtless left to me for other spheres." The "voided body" returns to "further offices," to "the eternal uses of the earth." (Id.) If even now "it is not my material eyes which finally see, nor my material body which finally loves, walks, laughs, shouts, embraces, procreates" (p. 146), then even now there must be a real body that does these things.

The living look upon the corpse with their eyesight
But without eyesight lingers a different living and looks curiously
on the corpse. (p. 333.)

O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which I turn and
look at where I cast them. (p. 344.)

Such lines then as these are not to be taken as fanciful altogether. Whitman does not doubt that "interiors have their interiors, and that exteriors have their exteriors;" "that the eyesight has another eyesight, and the hearing another hearing, and the voice another voice." (p. 342.) Even now to the seer "your true soul and *body* appear." (p. 186.) Just as surely as

I see one building, the house that serves him for a few years, or
seventy or eighty years at most,

if my spiritual eyes were open could

I see one building, the house that serves him longer than that.
—(p. 334.)

Indeed, Whitman can see his fellow-man constructing, though unconsciously, "the house of himself or herself" that will "serve for all time." (p. 304.)

Nor does this "real body" pass out empty, as it "passes to fitting spheres," for it "carries what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to the moment of death." (p. 25.) It has been thus fashioned, invisibly, by the hands of life to serve as organ to your veritable Self. No bullet can really "kill what you really are." (p. 251.)

What you are picks its way. (p. 188.)

Nay, already while leading this life of fleshly vicissitude "Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am. . . . I witness and wait." (p. 32.) What is more, this "Me myself" (p. 32) is not the soul, if Whitman be relied upon to use his terms with any accuracy, for elsewhere we read:

I too, *with* my soul and body,

We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way. (p. 185.)

We should have then, according to our review so far of Whitman's doctrine, at least four distinct elements in man:—

(1) the excrementitious body.

(2) the real body.

(3) the soul.

(4) Me myself.

8. PERPETUITY OF CHARACTER.

But all this would seem unnecessary speculation if for the soul beyond these spheres there were nothing more to provide for than identity. "What has accrued to the soul" on earth, of which the real body is vehicle, must be in itself a secure possession. Now on no subject is Whitman more emphatic than on the

universality of Law. "The whole Universe is absolute Law." (Pr., p. 336.) Miracles in the sense of wonders all things whatsoever most assuredly are:—

Why, who makes much of a miracle?

As to me I know of nothing but miracles (p. 361);

in the sense of exceptions, however, there can be none without immediately reducing cosmos to chaos. "The great master has nothing to do with miracles." (Pr., p. 270.) The true modern Poet denies all exceptions. "Law is the unshakable order of the universe forever; and the law over all, and law of laws, is the law of successions; that of the superior law, in time, gradually supplanting and overwhelming the inferior one." (Pr., p. 219.) This passage has immediate reference, to be sure, to "physical force being superseded by that of the spirit," but its language implies that it is of general validity. Thus we have evolution as the "law of laws."

With the irrefragableness of law* and with the doctrine besides that "only the soul is of itself—all else has reference to what ensues" so that in it is the real judge of conduct,† it is clear there can be "no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement." (p. 291; Pr., p. 273.) "Each man to himself, and each woman to herself, is the word of the past and the present, and the true word of immortality." ‡ (p. 178.) Jehovah,

* Cf. Miracles, p. 301.

† Compare "There is no one or any particle but has reference to the soul" (p. 25) with "It is not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is any thing in the known universe more divine than men and women." (Pr., p. 270.)

‡ See in Appendix a note on Lord Byron as a "Chanter of Personality" in the sense of a moral responsibility that can not be shifted on another.

Brahm, or Saturnius, Universal Law in Time, "is relentless" and "forgives no man"—"dispenses . . . judgments inexorable without the least remorse." (p. 339.) Expiation alone blots out:

Miserable! yet for thy errors, vanities, sins, I will not now rebuke thee,

Thy unexampled woes and pangs have quelled them all,
And left thee sacred. (p. 306.)

It is, however, not suffering as such that helps. It is suffering, of the kind that *quells* the *sins* by stimulating growth, which of itself alone amounts to a "forgiveness."

In the higher structure of a human self, or of community, the Moral, the Religious, the Spiritual, is strictly analogous to the subtle vitalization and antiseptic play called Health in the physiological structure. (Pr., p. 471.)

Reformation comes from within. Evil being underdevelopment, all that is needed is *development*. There is, when the ways are amended, no sin left to forgive.

Of all "leadings," "none lead to greater things" than occupations "lead to." (p. 175.) Columbus gave God a "long and crowded life of active work, not adoration merely." (p. 323.)

Ah! little recks the laborer,
How near his work is holding him to God,
The loving Laborer through space and time. (p. 157.)

For the law of action and reaction being equal and contrary extends into the spiritual world, and is its chief law: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi, 7.)

All that a person does, says, thinks, is of consequence,
Not a move can a man or woman make that affects him or her in

a day, month, any part of the direct lifetime, or the hour of death,

But the same affects him or her onward afterward through the indirect lifetime. (p. 290.)

All that is to be henceforth thought or done by you, whoever you are, or by any one,

These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the identities from which they sprang, or shall spring. (p. 291.)

Therefore, there is a "prudence that suits immortality." (p. 289.)* True, "caution" has reference to the eternal, preferring it to the temporal. (Cf. Pr., p. 272.) It "knows that only that person has really learned" the lesson of life well, who has "learned to prefer results" (p. 291),† "immense spiritual results" (p. 374); and aware that every act "has results beyond death as really as before death" (p. 290), the truly prudent man, whose caution goes far enough (Pr., p. 272), realizes to the full that

Charity and personal force are the only investments worth any thing for after all. (p. 290.)

"Itself only finally satisfies the soul" (p. 291), and not any thing exterior and adventitious contributing to its real secret felicity, which as seen before is always an "Efflux of the Soul."

We shall have to add then to our analysis of the constitution of man, according to Whitman, a further element inhering in the real body and the soul, the perpetuity of which is strongly affirmed—the Character.

We have thus five distinct elements :

* Cf. Emerson's Essays on Prudence, Self-Reliance, and Compensation.

† Not utilitarian doctrine, *e. g.*, his idea of the greatness of defeat, etc., pp. 43, 45, 288, etc.

Body	{	(1) excrementitious Body,
	{	(2) the real Body,
Soul	{	(3) the Character,
	{	(4) the Soul,
Spirit	—	(5) Me myself,

which, if we have bracketed the first two couples, are very readily reducible to the Pauline trichotomy.*

9. "TRAVELING SOULS" AND THEIR END.

In the matter of Whitman's theology there now remains only to adduce evidence as to what his conception of immortal life really is. "Something there is more immortal than the stars." (p. 206.) He believes in nothing short of perfection for each and all. It is part of Whitman's very manliness that he does not want privileged classes, saints or heroes. He wants equal opportunities. He does not himself get

* Particular evidence of the view taken in this paper (that Whitman's oriental doctrines were not merely borrowed or adopted) may be found in the fact that his analysis of man gives us five elements only instead of the Hindu Seven. To make them seven, the "Me Myself" would have to be declared a Trinity. If it be contended that he does recognize Father, Son and Holy Ghost, it must be remembered that where he does so, he gives similar recognition to Satan. In case then you take the "Square Deific" literally as analyzing the "Divine Me Myself," you would have eight and not seven elements. But, as indicated already, I do not understand the "Square Deific" as a study of "God," but of our "Idea of God," quite another thing. Whitman does not presume to give us a bit of Divine Psychology. Of the inner life of Diety, he does not pretend to know more than any other sane and enlightened mortal. And, for one, "with the Mystery of God *he* dares not dally."

any mean comfort from being above others. He is thoroughly consistent, as most revolutionaries and vindicators of the people's rights, alas, are not:—

By God! I will accept nothing which all can not have their counterpart of on the same terms. (p. 48.)

He sings exultantly:—

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance.

Forever alive, forever forward . . .

They go! they go! I know that they go, but I know not where they go,

But I know that they go toward the best. (p. 127.)

Feeling that he has not really finished the work he might have done, not learned the lesson out, not tasted all the legitimate delights here, he believes that he will “come again upon the earth after five thousand years.” (p. 69.) When he meets a man full of his achievements he pointedly reminds him of a certain possibility likely to calm him:

Have you outstript the rest? are you the president?

It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there, every one and still pass on. (p. 45.)

Clearly it will not be in this particular earth life. To members of low and unfortunate races he addresses words of comfort and encouragement:—

I do not say one word against you way back there where you stand,

You will come forward in due time to my side. (p. 120.)

He is not anxious about the ill-born and ill-bred:—

The twisted skull waits, the watery or rotten blood waits,
The child of the glutton waits long, and the child of the drunkard
waits long, and the drunkard himself waits long,

The sleepers that lived and died wait, the far advanced are to go on in their turns, and the far behind are to come on in their turns. (p. 331.)

I saw the face of the most smeared and slobbering idiot they had at the asylum,

And I knew for my consolation what they knew not,

I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother,

The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenement,

And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,

And I shall meet the real landlord perfect and unharmed, every inch as good as myself. (p. 354.)

His attitude to the animals is of course exactly the same; and why not? Does he not feel between them and himself a very decided kinship?

They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession,

I wonder where they got those tokens,

Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

—(p. 54.)

Nor will he confine his doctrine of progress from form to form by any means to animals:—

The vegetables and the minerals are all perfect, and the imponderable fluids perfect;

Slowly and surely they have passed on to this, and slowly and surely they yet pass on. (p. 337.)

How significant, after perusing those extracts together, sound not now the words quoted before in a feebler sense:—

As to you Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths,

(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before!) (p. 77.)

He is not one whit tired in spirit:

All below duly traveled, and still I mount and mount.* (p. 71.)

* That Whitman ever went further, and found it necessary to adopt a theory of cycles or "cosmic incarnations," so to say, is very doubtful. The word "cycle" appears three times in *L. of G.*, pp. 27, 72, 85. With his anthropocentric view, the cosmos

We have seen that he has fully kept his word, having sung the “Songs of birth and shown that there are many births.” (p. 380.)

If any one should protest, but “I do not care to be perfect at such a cost; I don’t want you to be urging me this way. I am tired. Sing me a pleasant lullaby instead, about how every thing is going to be *done for me!*” I fancy sturdy old Walt would answer: “Go lull yourself with what you can understand, and with pianoforte tunes, for I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.” (p. 252.) Yet there *is* a peace ahead. That fifth element in man, the Me myself, is one in all. To live in it is to be finally at rest. This it was the very object of Whitman to glorify, yet with beautiful candor he confesses inability to approach it for us.

The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall flow and unite—they unite now. (p. 331.)

There is to be yet a “salvation universal,” an indescribable attainment:

When I undertake to tell the best, I find I can not. . . .
I become a dumb man. (p. 179.)

Aware that . . . before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands, yet untouched, untold, altogether unreached,
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock congratulatory signs and bows,
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have written,

did not interest him *per se*. To account for it was not his object. Indeed he tells us (*cf.* Pr., p. 298) “the rule and demesne of poetry will always be not the exterior but the interior, not the macrocosm but microcosm, not Nature but Man. Of the doctrine of metempsychosis a good illustration is given in the closing eight lines of “The Sleepers.” (p. 332.) (*Cf.* p. 282 of this essay.)

Pointing in silence to these songs and then to the sand beneath,
 I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single
 object, and that no man ever can,
 Nature here in sight of the sea, taking advantage of me to dart
 upon me and sting me,
 Because I have dared to open my mouth and sing at all.

—(pp. 202-3.)

In the poem, "A Riddle Song," he shows why this is so. That which eludes him is that which makes all intelligible, and which itself can only be known face to face.

Haply God's riddle it, so vague and yet so certain,
 The soul for it, and all the visible universe for it,
 And heaven at last for it. (p. 363.)

It is the terrible "One Self" *—

The fanged and glittering One whose head is over all, (p. 21.)
 and of whom to speak as one's self is absurd, and yet
 as "other than one's Self" absurder still.

Hymns to the universal God from the universal
 Man are the last fact we discern with mortal eye, illuminated though it be :

The ocean filled with joy—the atmosphere all joy!
 Joy! Joy! in freedom, worship, love! joy in the ecstasy of life!
 Enough to merely *be!* enough to breathe!
 Joy! Joy! all over joy! (p. 358.)†

10. WHITMAN'S METHODS AND STYLE.

To compose according to a theory that greatly varies from what may be said to have at least been immanent in literature before, is a perilous venture.

* For clearness' sake I have taken some liberties with the word "oneself," spelling it differently according to the different meanings.

† See pp. 255-259 for an exposition of the doctrine of the One.

Men of great initiative genius and courage will, to be sure, always stake life and fame upon a consistent protest against tyrannous tradition. But more often than not a man's theory of composition is one thing, and his practice another.

Now, Whitman undoubtedly repels many a reader by his oracular manner. He is fully aware of this.

These leaves and me you will not understand,
They will elude you at first and still more afterward. I will certainly elude you.
Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!
Already you see I have escaped from you. (p. 98.)

Nor is it any thing we can really bring against him. He writes to "tease us out of" our usual petty "thought." * He delights in paradox. He does not try to astonish. The man is free from any conscious tricks. The fact is, however, that the whole object of Whitman at all times is not to do something for his reader, but to make his reader do something for himself.

You are asking me questions and I hear you,
I answer that I can not answer, you must find out for yourself.
—(p. 74.)

If poetry be "criticism of life" or not, is best settled by the fact perhaps that the only true criticism of great poetry is life. Such Walt Whitman's surely is if we should accept this test—that the great poetry keeps pace with our advance, always a step or two ahead—while poetry that is not great we soon leave behind:

* Keat's "Ode to a Grecian Urn;" the office of all true art.

For it is not for what I have put into it that I have written this book,
Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it. (p. 98.)

Undoubtedly however there are other tests of poetry which seem more important to the majority of critics. That he should have to "wait to be understood by the growth of the taste of" himself (p. 273) would be nothing peculiar to him;—Wordsworth, Shelley, Browning, are well known modern instances of an author's having, as it were, to beget a new generation of readers.

But though Whitman's "words" do undoubtedly "itch at" one's "ears," till they are understood (p. 75), it would be insincere in the most enthusiastic disciple not to admit the many difficulties of approach to his master which seem at first sight gratuitous tests of patience, fortitude, self-control, and one might almost add foolhardihood. A man who boldly declares that "serving art in its highest" is "only the other name for serving God, and serving humanity" (Pr., p. 242), would, it might be supposed, spare no pains to make what he attempts to create as nearly perfect as possible. But it is not so much that Whitman considers the "love of the best" a "friend" that only "harries" man;* it is that with him the poem is not on paper, or in the ear of the reader, but in his mind. Perfect "literary form" to Whitman is whatever most directly arouses in the reader's mind what is in the poet's own. He goes even further than this. A moral purpose is always latent. "Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does." (Pr., p. 257.) The reader "must himself construct . . .

* Cf. "Sphinx" of R. W. Emerson.

the poem." The poet's language, if "fanned by the breath of nature," "seldomer tells a thing than suggests or necessitates it." (Id.) The poet, because he is a poet, wants to make a poet of you. He is—"hungry for equals day and night." (Pr., p. 269.) Like Moses he cries "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them."* He will have you not only become quite independent of him furnishing your own home-made chants, but he will have you illustrate them in what you are. "All must give place to men and women." (p. 175.) "How dare you place any thing before a man?" (p. 272.) "The psalm" does not sing itself, therefore he prefers "the singer," and, quite consistently, the reader is more precious to him than the poems he shall peruse. (p. 175.) These are, therefore, "not the finish," but rather "the outset." "To none will they bring to be content and full." (p. 138.) They will be "good health to you." (p. 79.) They are "chants . . . to vivify all" (p. 20) by inspiring the faith which in turn arouses dormant powers.

Now it is a fact that Whitman's poems possess, to a very eminent degree, this vital suggestiveness.† Nor is there any respectable critic who will quarrel with their originality of form as such. He does not consider our prejudices when he writes.‡ "People resent any thing new as a personal insult" (Pr., p. 482), and in support of this he quotes Bacon as saying that "the first sight of any work really new and first rate

* Numb. xi, 29.

† Whitman does not leave this doctrine of "suggestion" to be inferred. (Cf. Pr., pp. 483 and 493; L. of G., p. 434.)

‡ Cf. on writing for the public. (Pr., p. 497.)

in beauty or originality always arouses something disagreeable and repulsive." (Pr., p. 482.) In this we can not but agree with him. But we are still not wholly convinced that any true theory of composition can justify some things in *Leaves of Grass*. In fact we are sure that whenever Whitman was most consistent with an extreme doctrine of "suggestion" he utterly failed in his purpose. To men endowed with a quick, pictorial imagination, page-long catalogues of geographical and physiological names may conceivably be a source of extreme delight, and amount to a trip around the world, or to the possession of a wonderful human body translucent, nay transparent for the investigator's eye. To most men, however, these catalogues are a "*reductio ad absurdum*" of the theory.* They mean little or nothing at all. They are simply a weariness to the flesh. Nothing perhaps has more contributed to heap deserved ridicule on Whitman.

True that a so-called "negligent list of one after

* Sydney Lanier's use of the "catalogue" in the "Symphony" is very astonishing and effective. Each name a note as it were. We can not but honestly admit a feeling that the disciple here succeeded where the master failed.

Speaking of Sydney Lanier, were not those clever would-be destructive paragraphs in his "English Novel" a somewhat ungenerous attempt to conceal from himself and his readers his own evident indebtedness, in his best poetry, to the rugged singer of "athletic manhood?" Poor, sick Sydney Lanier! How such a line as "only health puts one rapport with the universe" must have stung him! But old Walt can well afford to be magnanimous, and wholly ignores his impertinent critique, including Lanier's in the list of names for which he has a "heart-benison" and "reverence for their memories," "the galaxy of the past." (Cf. Pr., pp. 481-482.)

another as I happen to call them to me or think of them " (p. 89) is not without an inner law, but it is one of purely personal association and therefore to us readers in all probability an unintelligible law. For him the beads maybe made a necklace, but he has cut the string and hurried the beads helter skelter into our lap. There is no use pretending that we shall re-string them. We do not. But, when the list is systematic, then we are still more annoyed. We feel that he is tricking us. He has had a text-book conveniently at hand, surely, for reference, or his memory is really altogether too retentive.

We are not surprised that there should be much incoherence in chants professedly "ecstatic," but that the sentence form should be deliberately abandoned is somewhat amazing. For after all, if man occupies the central position in nature, which Whitman arrogates for him, he surely has a right to impose on nature the laws of his own being. It is quite true that things are not respectively subjects and objects set off against one another, distinguished from all other things, and fettered in unique relations, represented by verbs hovering between subjects and objects. Nevertheless it is useless to defy man's mental constitution. If Whitman does not make sentences for us, we must, mentally at least, make sentences for ourselves out of his fragments. Still, again, we ought to admit with all candor that a breathless speed, a sense of kaleidoscopic change, are often effects apparently due to this rejection of the sentence-form; and we would venture to suggest that whenever Whitman deliberately constructed a catalogue, or refused to form sentences, he failed of his

purpose, and deserved to fail, but when the verbal incoherency, the bombardment of independent nouns was a necessity imposed from within, he succeeded in producing the desired result.

Poetic style, when *addressed to the soul*, is less definite form, outline, sculpture, and becomes vista, music, half tints, and even less than half tints. True, it may be architecture; but again it maybe the forest wild wood, or the best effect thereof at twilight, the waving oaks, and cedars in the wind, and the impalpable odor. (Pr., p. 287.)

The general truth of this we may admit. We may give up the "garden" (Pr., p. 497) for the roadside mob of wild flowers; with him, we may prefer the Rocky Mountains to a row of pyramids and obelisks (Pr., p. 143), and yet might we not protest that every thing man makes must have a beginning, a middle and an end, a center and a circumference? After all, as said above, man imposes on the wildest landscape laws of perspective that reduce it to human comprehension. It would be more natural if we should emancipate things from this arbitrary tyranny, but how can we be *thus* "faithful to things" (p. 271) without failing to reject "whatever insults" our souls (p. 273), both which are imperative commands of Whitman to the true Poet of Democracy? (Pr., p. 265-6.) Whitman's best poems are neither chaotic, nor mechanically symmetrical. They are true organisms. They are sons of his spirit "begotten, not made."

Rhymes and rhymers pass away, poems distilled from poems pass away,
The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave ashes,
Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the soil of literature. (p. 272.)

We would not for one moment have Whitman

less arrogant, defiant. We have too much enjoyed, in sympathy, his great declaration of independence. We would boldly assert that it is good, very good, indeed, that Whitman abandoned the old forms of "arbitrary and rhyming metre." We are willing he should "soar to the freer, vast, diviner heaven of prose." We are quite satisfied, provided his work is as he himself demands "subtly and necessarily, always rhythmic" . . . "distinguishable easily enough." (Pr., p. 323.) This it is not always. It does not always "soar." It often has no wings at all. It sometimes falls far below the veriest flats of prose. Is Matthew Arnold's *Philomela* verse? and therefore poetry? Then quite as surely must Whitman's good work be recognized as poetry, even if Sidney and Shelley be vociferously voted heretics by a majority of critics for calling Plato a poet, though he wrote in prose. Rhythm is the pulse of poetry; should it not then quicken with emotion, become sluggish almost suspended, with the feeling of inner stillness; or should it by its clock-like regularity argue the mere abstractness of the poem, our utter indifference to it, the entire lack of vital sympathy between spirit and form, making the form not a living expressive body, but a lifeless vessel wholly unconcerned with the nature of its contents? * To quote superb instances from Whitman would be a delightful and extremely easy task.

* Again, in this matter of "organic form," Lanier has grasped the same idea as Whitman. "Corn" and two of his "Hymns to the Marshes," in some respects his very best work, have, preserving rhyme, and with an over-use, perhaps, of alliteration, utterly abandoned metre of a fixed kind, and an arbitrary stanza, while the rhythm is made to impart the mood.

Whitman rarely spoils good matter with bad form; it is because matter unfit for use, or such as he at all events did not know how to use, is mixed with it, that there are gaps, bottomless pits of—not prose—but something as much below plain prose as his levels and heights are above it. As for his vocabulary, no one will say that Whitman was a slavish “follower of beauty,” though, again, he was not always her “august master.” (p. 137.) He is right, no doubt, in saying that “slang” is an “attempt” “to escape from bald literalism, and express itself illimitably” made by common humanity; but, is it a successful attempt always, and is *common* humanity to be the measure of “the Answerer?” If we are to see ourselves glorified in him, he must be above our faults, succeed easily where we fail. Barbaric importations,* words ruthlessly mutilated, a disregard for the associative atmosphere of words, are complaints easily lodged against our poet. We do wish he had not given the adversary so much occasion to blaspheme. We love the man, we reverence his purpose. One who prefers *me*, the reader, to his own poem, I will endure much from—things at the hand of another wholly beyond a moment’s sufferance. Why “meat of a man?” Would not “flesh” do? Why “Ma femme” for “bride” or “wife?” Why “rapport” for “touch” or “sympathy?”† Why some of the

* If Whitman hoped these foreign words used occasionally would serve to express the composite nature of the American people, he failed signally. Could we assimilate as ill our immigrants as Whitman’s English does these unhappy foreign words, our people would indeed become a crazy quilt!

† In his prose, terrific expressions abound: “toploftical,”

words that have appeared, in spite of all efforts to exclude such disturbers of the peace, in the quotations made in this paper? We can only, as lovers of Whitman, regret them. We shall learn not to notice them. Why a plural verb with a singular subject, or the reverse? Why “ye” with a singular noun in an apostrophe? Such trifles sour the temper of the new reader, and make proselyting no easy affair. And who, having felt that Whitman has done him good, does not wish to do a little private unostentatious proselyting?

11. “SO LONG.”

Is it necessary to point out in conclusion what are Whitman’s successes artistically? Perhaps a list of poems to read might well be constructed, though we now have from Mr. Arthur Stedman a selection which can be obtained in America.* Englishmen have been more fortunate.† Not that I could spare any thing from Whitman’s volume, but there is a good deal in it that is rather strong meat for babes, and for my part I should like to put Whitman’s book into the hands of babes.

Crossing Brooklyn Ferry—A SONG OF JOYS—
Song of the Universal—To You—Out of the Cradle
Endlessly Rocking—Tears—To the Man-of-Warbird

“civilizee,” cohered out of,” “literatuses,” “fetching up at,” “technists,” “admirant toward,” “arrière,” (= background), etc.

* Also “Gems from Whitman,” by Elizabeth Porter.

Prof. Oscar L. Triggs, of Chicago University, is now engaged upon a long needed “Primer to Whitman.”

† Selections of Walt Whitman’s poems, edited with introduction by Wm. M. Rossetti. Chatto & Windus, London, 1886.

“Whitman” (selections), edited by Ernest Rhys, in Canterbury Poets. Walter Scott, London.

—On the Beach at Night—The World Below the Brine—On the Beach at Night Alone—Gods—Beat! Beat! Drums!—The Artillery Man's Vision—WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED—This Compost—Warble for Lilac-time—Sparkles from the Wheel—The Ox-tamer—PASSAGE TO INDIA—PRAYER OF COLUMBUS—A Noiseless Patient Spider—Thou Orb Aloft Full-dazzling—THE MYSTIC TRUMPETER—To a Locomotive in Winter—A Riddle Song—Old War Dreams—Ashes of Soldiers—CAMPS OF GREEN—Halcyon Days—WITH HUSKY, HAUGHTY LIPS, O SEA.

This list, by no means of course complete, is made with reference to the reader. Nothing in these, we fancy, can possibly give him any reasonable offense. If he has come to enjoy all of these, let him trust himself to the sea. He may swallow a little brine, but he will not drown.

It is altogether of no use to praise. Praise seems impertinent to him who has enjoyed, and foolish to the prejudiced or unfortunate person who can not sympathize. Suffice it to say that minor difficulties will settle themselves in time for the student. "With care for a man or book such would be surmounted, and without it, what avails the faultlessness of either?" No more appropriate words here than these of Robert Browning concerning his *Sordello*. The greatest difficulties are for the most part in the reader. Walt Whitman never claimed to be more than a pioneer. He tells us that in his work "the words" are nothing, the drift "every thing." (p. 17.) Then, too, all his "chants" may not be for you. "Each for its kind" (p. 23) says he; mine for me, therefore, and yours for you. No doubt he is quite

ready to "offer his style to any one" (p. 380) and be surpassed by the humblest reader. (*Cf.* p. 74.) Undoubtedly some of us who have been brought up in hot-houses will feel uncomfortable in his open air, but, after the first horror is over, the sensation of limitless freedom will probably seem pleasant if anything.

As to morals—and decency—of course no one can answer such objections. I for one should allow them to remain insuperable. If your morals and your modesty should be in imminent danger because forsooth Whitman, like your physician, knows you have a body, and, like your conscience, is sure you have sinned enough not to cast stones at the most degraded brother or sister, is it with him, forsooth, you are going to be angry when he lets "nature speak with original energy?" (p. 27) when he makes his song and you meet "the facts face to face?" (p. 271.) Do you suppose Whitman never had any qualms about his "Adamic" songs? (*Cf.* *Pr.*, p. 191.) If against the wishes of dear friends he would not consent to their suppression he must have thought he had a good reason. He explains himself fully on this point in "Ventures on an old Theme." (*Pr.*, p. 322.) If he eliminated the "stock poetic expressions" so dear to you, it will perhaps comfort you to know it cost him a great deal of trouble to do this. (*Pr.*, pp. 20, 518.) If, wishing "the strength of health," not of "delirium" (*Pr.*, p. 157), he sometimes gives you what he terms the "drench of passions" "life coarse and rank" (p. 94), it is better than if he had indulged you in spiced innuendos and prurient proprieties. If he annoys you by his perpetual cheer, if in your fits

of cultured listlessness or philosophic despondency he positively irritates you by giving "himself the benefit of the doubt," and insisting that he is happy unless he is very sure indeed of the contrary (Pr., p. 92), it may perhaps be a pleasant thought to you that he at times felt "these modern tendencies to turn every thing to pathos, ennui, morbidity, dissatisfaction, death." (Pr., p. 109.) Thirty years of ill health could not break his spirit. He insisted that "in the fact of life itself" we should "discover and achieve happiness." (Pr., p. 249.)

Do you say, O all this optimism would be well in Millennial days, not now? Well, he will tell you it is good to live in the future. It is magnificent to have occasion for the "afflatus" to fall on you, it is glorious to hear the "holy ghost" speak within, to have the "prophetic vision." (Pr., p. 227.)

If you are angered by his self-sufficiency, and fancy he means really to repel you, it will be well to remember that "though the live-oak glistens" solitary, Whitman knows very well that he at all events "could not without a friend, a lover near." (p. 106.) If you wish he had been a greater scholar, like yourself very learned, incapable of technical blunders even when off his guard, you will be apt to forgive him. when you consider how on the occasion of his remark that Browning "must be deeply studied out" and "quite certainly repays the trouble," he frankly admitted that he for his part was "too old and indolent," that he could not "study" and "in fact *never*" had "studied." (Pr., p. 483.)

After all Whitman is what he is. If you want him to take you by the hand he will do it in his own

hearty, rough way. He will not shake your arm out of joint, but no one can promise that your monocle will not be dislodged from its supercilious place;—and who would venture his reputation as a prophet by assuring you that your immaculate shirt bosom will suffer no rumples if he should happen to put his big brawny arms about you?

In conclusion, you may ask me, why can I not get the same thing Whitman gives from another—say, Emerson or Browning? Well, perhaps *you* can. The fact however is that Emerson's words sound impersonal, abstract and cold—vague, unreal—while there is no doubt you shall have to understand Whitman. He drives his ideas like wedges of live lightning into your soul. No shields or helmets or customary convention will protect it. You may walk with Browning (I say you *may*) and take an absurd delight in his difficulties as such, you may fancy all he says has reference only to this man or that woman—you *may* apply the sermon to your neighbor in the pew and remain Pharisaically content—you *may* look upon Browning's poetry only as an arsenal for controversial weapons, and use Elvire's husband's logic to justify your marital irregularities, or Bishop Blougram's arguments to fortify your soul in lucrative deceit—(I have known a bishop to quote his sophistries copiously, elaborately, in a defense of his own theological position!)—but one thing is very sure, Whitman's Message is to *you*. It is positively you he means. There is no doubt about this. When he lashes, it is you are hurt. When he mocks, it is you who feel rebuked. When he exults, it is you who are uplifted from the slough of your despond. When you try to pose as virtuous, it is you

he will denounce. If you are dealing in "doubts, swervings," and subtle "doublings upon" yourself "typical of our age" (Pr., p. 403), it is out of *you* he will "shame silliness" (p. 38) and make you very sure of yourself. If you are thinking of what a poor chance in life you have, he will tell you it is just what you make of it, and that you can be a hero, "a God" if you please. Now all this is said to *you*—unmistakably to *you*—and there is no possible evasion! How then can you afford to wrap yourself in a cloak of refined prejudices?

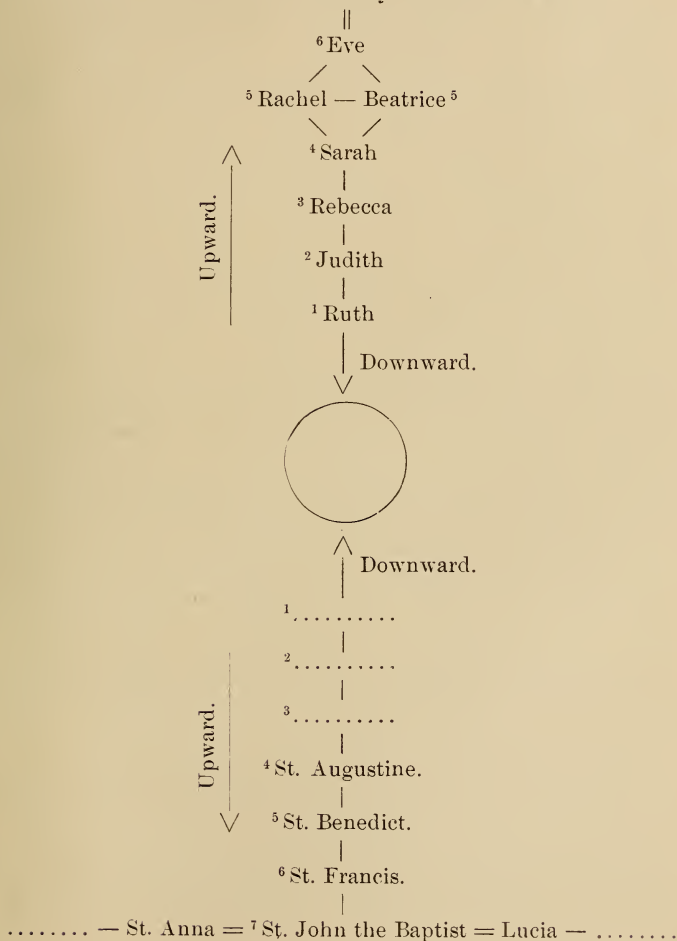
Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why
should you not speak to me?

And why should I not speak to you? (p. 18.)

APPENDIX.

DIAGRAM OF A SECTION OF THE ROSE OF THE BLESSED, SHOWING THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF IDEAL WOMANHOOD.

St. John — St. Peter = ⁷ St. Mary = Adam — Moses



APPENDIX 2.

"WORDSWORTH'S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY."

(Note to page 112 of England's Agnostic Poets.)

For comparison with Swinburne's "Philosophy" let us take a cursory glance at Wordsworth's (*Cf.* particularly, Tintern Abbey and Ode to Duty). Passionate pleasure is dissatisfying short of its limit, and at its limit sets in the reaction of pain. Social joys depend on a shifting ever self-readjusting world of men; all real relations are therefore subject to strain. Only two things abide with man: *himself*, his world of thought; *nature*, his world of "eye and ear." Out of one of these, or both, must he extract his life's happiness. No perverse contempt is felt for "the grand elementary principle of pleasure" by which man "knows, and feels, and lives, and moves." Sympathy with pain itself "is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure." (Preface to Lyrical Ballads.) His mission as a Poet is to increase man's world of joyous experience. He could do so by giving us an imaginative taste of what we *would*, but *can not*, experience—extending our being fictitiously, and after the poem is over, allowing us to shrink again to our ordinary dimensions—to feel perhaps the ache of discontent, and the fury of rebellion. He prefers to set before us always what we *can* but will not experience (*i. e.*, can not because we *will* not), either from ignorance or perversity; so, he extends the reader's being fictitiously, only to extend it really, perhaps, for the reader *need* not shrink. If he will keep his senses *open* (not clogged by prejudgments of the *mind*) "in a wise passiveness," and *clear* (not covered with dulling rust of previous experience of sense, so that the memory of previous experiences precedes the new sensation instead of following it); if, in a word, he will "keep the young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks," all that Wordsworth's poems offer him he can afterward find in nature about him wherever he happens to be.

Wordsworth's peculiar mission, then, was to make men realize how much normal wholesome pleasure is within their reach day by day, if they will only possess their world of thought and their world of "eye and ear." It is with the latter we should begin: (1) Sounds, colors, perspectives, perfumes, etc., etc., are a source of vital joy accessible to almost all, quickening, stimulating, liable to no reaction, quiet, serene, incapable of being pushed to

the debatable limit this side of pain. (2) These happy sensations can be stored in memory (the "inward eye"), and all these pleasures can be had over and over again when we are banished from beautiful objects; and when we are in the presence of nature after the complete tasting of the present delight we can by the help of memory and imagination have the added consciousness of past delight, prolonging so the present thrill. (3) The present pleasure face to face with nature is furthermore intensified by the gratifying consciousness of consequent memory pleasures in the future, so, as it were, anticipating the delights with which this present delight is pregnant. (4) The latent analogy of this outer world and its events (nature) to man's inner world (of thought) gradually divined, gives rise to a strange sense of kinship. (5) The gratitude for joys received from nature involved subtly a personification of nature—the recognition of a Spiritual essence of Nature, an Immanent God to whom all this gratitude goes, and to whom the soul is akin.

"Nature" indeed feeds man in his whole being; that is to say, through his healthy senses is offered him all that his highest faculties need:

(a) Simple, unanalyzable wholesome pleasures (*sensual satisfaction*).

(b) Giving him to observe the reign of law (*intellectual satisfaction*).

(c) Furnishing so the spectacle of every particular thing existing for all others yet serving its own self in apparent unrestraint (the law of social order exemplified), whence Nature is called "the Soul of all his moral being" (*moral satisfaction*).

(d) Impressions of supersensual quiet beauty (*aesthetic satisfaction*).

(e) Serves as a conserver of his past (stimulating memory) and an anticipator of his future (stimulating imagination); indeed, discovers to him a real sympathy with his inner life. "What more can a friend do?" (*Affectional satisfaction*).

N. B. For one not an egoist, a friend might furnish occasions for self-sacrifice, self-restraint, humility, etc. But, then, Wordsworth undoubtedly was an egoist.

(f) Since his body (manifestation) is adapted to Nature, the body (manifestation) doubtless of Spirit (intelligence, love) he must believe that Spirit akin to his own, and since It abides, he may conceive It to have produced that kinship and mutual fitness

for ultimate soul satisfying relations, and to deserve therefore as well as stimulate his gratitude and love (*devotional satisfaction*).

An "impulse from a vernal wood" can do more for us "than all the sages can," and teach us more of "moral evil and of good" because that *impulse* may be the quickening of "bright shoots of everlastingness" *in us*, and the realization of the sublimity of moral order which can not be imposed from without (since Nature is infinite and omnipotent), but is self-imposed, or rather wholly unconscious and unwilled, such as our own highest morality would be:—the unerring spontaneous expression of a beautiful character.

APPENDIX 3.

SHELLEY'S USE OF THE WORD ANNIHILATION.

(Note to page 169 of *Prometheus Unbound*.)

It may help some readers to comment here on Shelley's peculiar use of the word *annihilation* and kindred words. *Annihilation* occurs in the description of the sea bottom as equivalent to that confusion which renders things indistinguishable and therefore in their individual character invisible and, so far as our knowledge is concerned, as though they were not. "Prodigious shapes huddled in gray annihilation." (*Pr. Unb.*, Act IV, l. 301.) It is used to signify the utter vanishing of a thing not merely in its character but in its substance. "Hate" is "drunk up by thirsty nothing," and "love burst in, filling" its "void annihilation." (*Id.*, l. 354.) To assert that a thing is not, because removed from perception, were absurd. Shelley's famous negative argument for immortality, in the "Conclusion" of the "Sensitive Plant," depends on the very fact that not merely the minute but also the mighty "exceeds our organs," which limit us to only a few octaves of sound, one of light, and perhaps much less than one of thought. "The intense inane" in which man would be "pinnacled" but for certain "clogs" (*Pr. Unb.*, Act III, sc. iv, l. 204) designates that which is meaningless to the human mind, because it transcends it, and defies exploration by its powers as at present developed (= "inane"); yet does subsist in virtue of inner energy (= "intense") only too "real" to get "reality" from the "gathered rays" of our present "thought." (*Pr. Unb.*, Act III, sc. iii, l. 50.) If *annihilation* in (*Epipsych.*, l. 558), "one Heaven, one Hell, one immortality, and one annihilation" (unless taken as a

direct equivalent of Hell), dissolves the meaning of the whole line, nay, of the whole passionate period of which it is the last word, how can there be any "ripening" in the "winter of the tomb" to "a better bloom?" (Epipsych., l. 367.) Does it not, clearly, signify the process of passing from the sphere of what is knowable by man as now constituted, and therefore "real" (definitely thought), into the sphere of the unknowable, which is "real," in the Shelleyan sense of the word, only by passionate prophetic anticipation, with reference to powers yet wholly wanting, or rudimentary? As Shelley gives us an "embodied Joy" (To a Skylark, st. 3; also read *unbodied*), does not "annihilation" mean *relative* annihilation, *i. e.*, existence, intense, vivid, self-conscious, with all limitation and therefore all perceivability (that might serve to distinguish it objectively from non-existence) abstracted? If this is what the word means, we find it harmonizes with all that Shelley says elsewhere of "life," "death," and "immortality." A denial of self (*i. e.*, an annihilation, an assumption into the divine one Selfhood = an absorption), is the negative designation of what is as yet in positive terms unthinkable and unspeakable.

APPENDIX 4.

IONE AND PANTHEA.

(Note to page 177 of Prometheus Unbound.)

Put in parallel columns the respective speeches of Ione and Panthea and add what is said about them. It becomes clear how definite was Shelley's conception of them, or rather how consistent with one conception only of them, is all that he makes them say to and of one another. *Ione* is always first to see and enjoy the outer appearance, to be enraptured, or repelled by horror; "beauty" gives her "voice" (while it drowns Panthea's) (Act I, l. 767), which by the way, is the beauty of colors; she feels "delight from the past sweetness." (Act IV, l. 180). Ravished by her dream of Prometheus's release, she wakes with no definite ideas; unable to *tell* what she seeks (for she knows not), only sure it is "something sweet since it is sweet even to desire it;" though "before," she "always knew what she desired" and never "found delight to wish in vain." (Act II, sc. i, l. 94.) Clearly she is not "Hope." To me she seems the Perception of Beauty (and there-

fore of ugliness) in the sense world, and in our inner mental reproduction of it. The *meaning* of what she sees she has to get of Panthea.

Panthea is the "sister" to the "Glory Unbeheld" of Asia, "her companion" and her "own chosen one" (Act II, sc. v, l. 33), her "shadow." (Act II, sc. i, l. 70.) She is a living sympathy between the Soul of Man, fallen, and the Soul of Nature, solitary and obscured. Asia sees Prometheus in her eyes. (Act II, sc. i, l. 110.) Panthea is the first to worship the transfigured Asia, but, note, she "feels" and "sees not," even can "scarce endure the radiance of her beauty." (Act II, sc. v, l. 17.) She signifies not "Faith," which, as used in the New Testament, means primarily "personal trust," and only secondarily "credence in what I have not experienced, due to personal trust in one who has;" she is rather that which intuitively seizes the meaning of what Ione enjoys externally. Ione is Perception, Panthea Divination. Perception of what beauty there is about him never forsakes Prometheus. Divination, spiritual understanding, does; but only to *carry* him to Asia, and to share in her quest for his freedom. She is, then, that power whereby the Soul of Man, though he can not see Ideal Nature, yet obtains for himself the assurance that she continues to be, that she is no mere remembered dream, but a living, if absent, fact. To say that she is Spiritual "Insight," as Prof. Scudder does, is well, but to identify this with "Faith," in any Christian sense, is perilous; besides, Panthea is always "insight" into the "sight" which is Ione; and when Panthea goes to Asia, we feel that Ione is still with her (at least in what she means), though as persons of the drama they are sundered for a while.

APPENDIX 5.

COLERIDGE'S THEOSOPHY.

(Note to page 195 of *Prometheus Unbound*.)

With Shelley's it is interesting to compare Coleridge's Theosophy:

" 'Tis the sublime of man
 Our noontide majesty to know ourselves
 Parts and proportions of *one wondrous whole!*"
 —(Religious Musings.)
 "The savage roams,
 Feeling himself, *his own low self, the whole;*

When he by sacred sympathy might make
The *whole one* SELF. . . ." (Religious Musings.)

" 'Tis God

Diffused through all that *doth make all one whole.*" . . . (Ib.)

" . . . as one body seems the aggregate

Of atoms numberless, each organized ;

So by a strange and dim similitude

Infinite myriads of *self-conscious minds*

Are one all-conscious SPIRIT." (The Destiny of Nations.)

"The drowsed soul

. . . of its nobler nature 'gan to feel

Dim recollections, and thence soared to hope. . . .

From hope and firmer faith to perfect love

Attracted and absorbed : and centered there

God only to behold, and know, and feel,

Till *by exclusive consciousness of God*

(All self-annihilated) *it shall make*

God *its identity* : God all in all !

We and our Father ONE !" (Religious Musings.)

All that meets the bodily sense I deem *symbolical*. (The
Destiny of Nations.)

"Treading . . . all visible things

As steps that upward to the Father's throne

Lead. . . ." (Religious Musings.)

He who has this philosophy and takes it seriously finds that

"from himself he flies,

Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze

Views all creation ; and he *loves it all*.

And blesses it, and calls it very good." (Ib.)

Hence the Doctrine of Universal Brotherhood :

"Nature . . . may well employ

Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart

Awake to Love and Beauty.

No sound is dissonant which tells of life."

—(This Lime-tree Bower My Prison.)

Even the "foal of an ass" would he take with him

"in the dell

Of peace in *mild equality* to dwell." (To a Young Ass.)

Hence the whole myth of the Ancient Mariner, his doom proceeding from a recklessness of inferior life, his slavation from the

And the great *Spirit of Good* did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue
Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed; for *none*
Knew good from evil." (St. 27, 28.)

Only the *woman* by her intuitive penetration understood the good snake.

But, after Prometheus' liberation, his curse on evil has taken effect. Evil is obliged to realize itself to the full, and to *appear itself*. The mutual transformation first effected by the Spirit of Evil is now reversed. Good resumes its "soaring" sunward flight, on eagle-wings, with unblinded eagle-eyes, whilst evil "crawls" on its biblical belly once more, and eats dust and ashes. So intolerable, however, was the temporary disguise of the Spirit of Evil, as the "inspired good," that Shelley changed, as we have seen, in Act III, sc. i, the "eagle" of "Laon and Cythna" to a "vulture," which might seem an eagle only to very bad ornithologists!

APPENDIX 7.

BYRON AS CHANTER OF PERSONALITY.

(Note 6, page 311, of Walt Whitman.)

As Chanter of personality Whitman had a predecessor in Lord Byron, the spell of whose poetry on his contemporaries was due in large measure to the novel importance accorded the "individual will." In the early romances the integrity of the individual was made to seem of more importance than moral laws. In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage we were given a passionate diary, and in Don Juan a sarcastic one, of that defiant individuality. In Manfred he appears as hero. The world can not yield him oblivion when too late he has found out that

"The tree of knowledge is not that of life."

Nor can the beauty of it, for he would have to *surrender himself* to it—a thing he will not do. Every thing speaks to him of himself. Summoning to his aid magical powers, he brings before himself the shadow of Astarte, his beloved, for the destruction of whose happiness, it is, his soul is suffering perpetual torture. He has long ceased to justify "his" deeds "unto" himself—"the last *infirmity* of evil." All left to him is self-mastery, making:

"His torture tributary to his *will*. . . ."

"No other spirit . . . hath
A soul like his—or *power upon his soul*."

For his power over spirits

"Was purchased by no compact, . . .
But by superior science."

He did not bow to Arimanes, prince of devils:

"Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him
The overruling Infinite . . .
And we will kneel together."

He utterly rejects the comforts of Christianity, as hitherto understood, which are offered by the Abbot:

"Whate'er

I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and *myself*. I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator."

"There is no power . . .

Can exorcise . . .
From out the unbounded spirit, the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
Upon itself; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul."

As he has refused the help of heaven, so does he defy the powers of hell:

"Away. I'll die as I have lived—*alone*. . . ."

"I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye; . . .

What ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb."

"I *stand*
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye!"

"Back to thy hell!

Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shall possess me, *that* I know;
What I have done is done."

"Thou did'st not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—

But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!
 The hand of Death is on me—but not yours!”

A strong protest all through, surely, against the immemorial notion (however religious it may be) that we are but a battle-field for angels and devils! How wretched is he whose individuality and its exceeding pride sunders him from his fellows is also shown in Manfred. What draws us in Manfred is not however the fact of his misery, but his tremendous sense of responsibility, his indomitable courage, his determination for good or ill to be *himself*, and to consider no dastardly escape—putting his guilt on an innocent Savior—as worthy of a man; yet at the same time equally prepared to extirpate the cowardice that would throw the burden on evil spirits. For this powerful protest against whatever would destroy the dignity of the soul, we must honor Byron, and realize fully the advance that has been made in this direction when we compare the last scene of Manfred with the pitiful moral breakdown of Faustus in the great Marlowe's drama, which does duty for catastrophe, and has been so extravagantly praised, not, alas, always for its poetry, but for the indirect tribute it is supposed to pay to a moribund theology. Does poor Kit turn in his grave, when that scene is *thus* praised?

APPENDIX 8.

A HOSTILE CRITIQUE ON WHITMAN.

(Note to page 245 of Walt Whitman.)

The Apostle of Chaotism. The University of the South Magazine, predecessor of the Sewanee Review, May, 1890:

“We have before us a book, and one, whatever may be said of it, unique in character. It purports to contain poetry. Capitals at the beginning of jagged lines inform the eye of that deliberate intention. The whole is launched defiantly into the world. From hearsay we gather that Wordsworth's prophecy has been at length fulfilled. Surely, he who chanted immortality of idiot boys and Peter Bells would hail this robust disciple of his theory who uses the language of semi-cultivated men to express life as fully as he perceives it, unflinchingly, forcibly, without regard to aesthetic or ethical conventions, a prophet superior to all time-honored artifice. The Master put great faith in his reader's

longevity, the more advanced Disciple, in his unliability to nausea. . . . Was the book written solely to obtain notoriety for one who had vainly striven after legitimate fame? To be novel at any price was his purpose, think you? To disprove Solomon's wisdom by letting the sun shine on something new? All had been tried that seemed not in absolute violation of beauty and decency. There remained for an ambitious conqueror only what had been hitherto contemned. Better be king of gutter-filth and "foetor," to plant one's foot on the world's dung-hill, than to cower, one of many, be they never so noble, or to be jostled on the thronged steps of shining temples where none seem great but the superhuman."

"I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth of the taste of myself." So a dim hope is really extended to us, lest we might fancy ignorance and folly were trying to pass for inspiration, thanks to a veil of chaotic incomprehensibility, and that for aught we knew a maniac might be the veiled prophet!

Any definition of verse stricter than one which might admit the *best* utterances of Whitman, would exclude those of David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Job, and St. John the Divine.

"Faces so pale with wondrous eyes, very dear, gather closer yet
 Draw close, but speak not.
 Phantoms of countless lost,
 Invisible to the rest, henceforth my companions,
 Follow me ever—desert me not while I live.
 Sweet are the blooming checks of the living—sweet are the
 musical voices sounding,
 But sweet, ah, sweet are the dead with their silent eyes!"

Will this be prose, and Matthew Arnold's "Philomela" verse, and consequently poetry? Read the closing strophe of the "Passage to India." Do you pronounce it utterly prose? Has it not more fire than much American "poetry?"

Verse of English poets has hitherto been rhythmic within metric limits somewhat arbitrarily adopted, but once adopted, inviolable. Here we have language intended to be rhythmic without such fixed metric limits. Shall then the *best* utterances of Whitman be confined forever deep in a Dantesque hell of prose,

without hope of purgatory or heaven? Had we only these *best* utterances, a case *might* be made. Doubtless, Whitman conscientiously thought that, except in those rare cases where he rhymed intentionally, he had succeeded in casting all forms to the wind. To obey any restrictions, whether of fair precedent or reason, would have been quite inconsistent in the "Adamic" citizen and "chanter" of these states; hence he resolved to take his natural limitations for his only law. Nevertheless, to say that he "escaped form" were absurd. Whenever he is most harmonious, he can be scanned, and we can not doubt but that in his heart he preferred those passages. Furthermore, he is fast bound in the most illiberal of mannerisms. Having rejected meters, he adopted as his perpetual style ejaculatory abruptness, impassioned contempt for grammar and logic. Anacolouthon transfigured is his favorite mold for "ecstatic chants." Miltonic latinisms sorely out of atmosphere; barbarisms that career through his pages like Huns putting all harmony to fire and sword; vulgarities that rasp and rip; inconceivable pilings of detached words, formless pyramids without visible apex or foundation, very towers of Babel with plentiful confusion of tongues—English Spanish, French, and Slang—to the utter consternation of the reader, and the temporary prostration of his aesthetic and moral judgment. Let us see what is possible to this contemner of style. Why, a frenetic upward flight of nine hundred and fifteen words—no rest, no real connection—a thunder-cloud of crows to obscure the sun, and deafen the earth with hoarse cries. Here is the peccant period, yet innocent compared with some of its Kith and Kin. (Song of Myself, Strophe, 33.)

In "Salût au Monde" we are regaled with geography ecstasies insane, and foaming at the mouth:—nations, cities, rivers, mountains, all in a stupendous whirl of incoherence, introduced by 8 *Walt Whitman's*, 18 *I hears*, 16 *I sees*, 2 *I beholds* (on account of the word's superior rarity patronizing 9 *some* clauses), 19 *others*, 2 *wait ats*, with a redoubtable array of cities, 50 *I sees*, 5 *I am coverings*, with 24 cities, 1 *I belong in* with 7, 1 *I descend* with a full stop. Then with renewed ardor, having touched ground, 12 *I sees*, 1 *I look on*, 1 *I see at*, 1 *I look on*, 8 *I sees*, 27 exclamatory *yous*, 2 *all yous*, 2 *and yous*, 5 *each of us's* 18 *yous*, 2 *I do's*, etc., etc. This is climax without doubt, but with respect to infinite distances, where parallel lines meet and other strange things will occur from

time to time; ay, a climax, to be sure, leviathen-like and choice! . . .

We begin to understand his poetic rapacity and would be led to fancy the digestive powers of his "omnivorous" lines excellent, but for "*belched* words." And yet he says: "I have offered my *style* to every one!" For him the muses are undaunted Bacchantes, hands gored with the blood of Orpheus, feet frantic around the huge anacolouthon which serves for throne to Jove, shouting insanely and tossing out their hydrophobic carols.

As has been implied, his Rhapsodies are for the most part didactic. Very much precious time is spent in assuring us with exquisite irrelevancy that he sings. Could frequent reiteration change falsehood into truth, some would doubtless become convinced of that would-be fact. It is no exaggeration to state that his usual song consists in saying over and over again that he is about to sing, and cataloguing the subjects of future "recitatives," "ecstatic songs," "chants," and "carols." Evidently this ends in becoming more *formal* even than the stilted invocations which Byron satirized in "Hail, muse, etc., we left Don Juan."

Sympathy and manliness (although the former is often unbearably blasphemous and the latter brutal, or bestial), are his most captivating qualities."

Alas! Who, or rather *what*, is his God? . . . It is universally inclusive—a sort of *aqua regia* that dissolves all heterogeneous substance into homogeneous (protoplasmic?) liquid, which may be taken like a patent medicine for all soul and skin diseases in homoeopathic doses. "Why should I pray? Why should I venerate and be ceremonious? . . . I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones." In my case, I should prefer that interesting comparison to be *post-mortem*. "And I say to mankind, be not curious about God." "I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four." "I find letters from God dropped in the street," thanks to a trans-stellar postal service, "and every one signed by God's name." We believe we have reached a materialistic pantheism with a ubiquitous quasi-gazeous "*deus in machina*." In spite of lack of "curiosity," like Mephistopheles he likes to keep on good terms "with the Old Man" (we quote

from Goethe), and so the average man represented by Walt Whitman pays occasionally a personal visit to his Collective or Average God. "My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain!"

I this (referring to the Square Deific) the sublimity of drunkenness? Nay, hear this Vesuvian burst of adoration: "Santa Spirita," etc., etc.

Let us follow him step by step, from his Nihilistic Theology and Chaotistic Ethics, to his more positive creed: "Knowing the perfect fitness of things, while they discuss I am silent and go and bathe and admire myself." "To look on my rose-colored flesh! . . . To be this incredible God I am!" Lo, Polyphemus, his only eye put out by Lust, playing at Narcissus by the stream side! "If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my body or any part of it, etc., etc.;" for, then, in spite of the Doctrine of Indifference, dinned in our ears over and over again, he specializes from his belligerent Pan-Fetichism with an incredible enthusiasm; and, after substituting "meat" for "flesh," "procreation" for "creation," "breeding" for "love" in the technical terminology, and furthermore, supplementing it with a munificent new vocabulary of hilarious diabolism, he attempts to establish in utterly unquotable ravings his more perfectly evolved system of Neo-phallicism.

Yea, thou prophet, thou Apostle of Chaotism, we greet thee! Hail, thou that art—nay, let us grow calm—only a man, rude, and glorying in his rudeness; crude, and magnifying crudeness; daring, brutal, sympathetic, bestial, atheistic, nihilistic, socialistic, American, cosmopolitan, materialistic, mystic, dreamer, ranter—nay, let us not call him fool, let us not call him maniac,—only the benign Apostle of Chaotism! He who finds "humanity" too narrow a term and would substitute "animality," which is less exclusive!

This rhapsodist, this poet (if we may call a sewer-rat astray in the secret parts of Parnassus by such names), although he is ever raving of this land, God be praised, he is *not* representative of these States, nor of Canada (spelt with a K), nor of the Pottawattami Indians, primitive though they be. He does not stand for America, nor for this age, nor for mankind in any historic

age. Catullus, Boccaccio, Rabelais, were prudes-among-Puritans to him. He is a monstrosity that can be classed in no known geological age, nor Pliocene, nor Miocene; but in one only, of which he is the sole relic, and which by analogy to these we might term conveniently the *Obscene*.

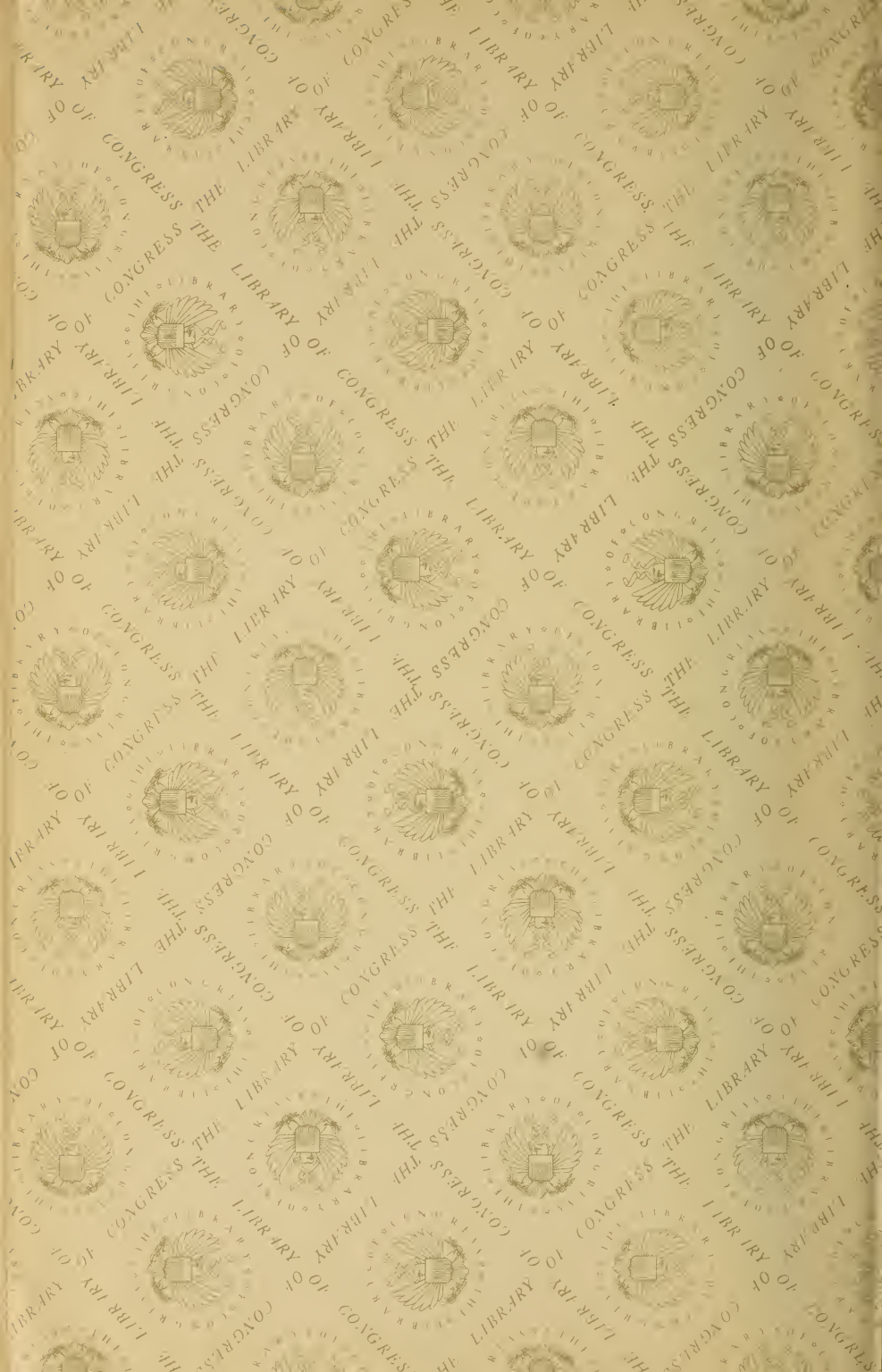
Few like to admit that they have been converted. It is a dangerous admission. It implies the possibility of further conversion. We forget that firmness, obstinate tenacity, virtues in conduct are vices in thought. To be ever ready to change when superior reasons are against us, is just that unchangeable loyalty to truth we commend. We must abandon the lower round of the ladder for the higher, be constantly inconstant, if we would mount.

It may seem a questionable expedient to print in this Appendix extracts from an insolent critique. Still, the extracts when hostile, are so ferocious as to condemn themselves. They will, however serve to prove that the writer of this essay went through the usual phases of amazement, horror, indignation, fury, exasperation, disapproval, qualified dislike, qualified liking, till at length he is forced by common honesty to confess himself an ardent lover of much that our great American champion of Democracy, political and spiritual, has written.

For my own part, I am not coward enough to be afraid to own my whole-hearted loyalty to the teacher, even though I may differ from him on many points deemed cardinal by most men. He himself desires us to be independent of him. He bids us not "look through his eyes," but our own. The Whitmanite does not worship Whitman, but joins Whitman in the worship of independent manhood, striving to be himself *the man*.

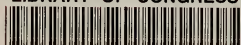
Many make extravagant claims for Whitman. Others still think it worth their while to vent their wrath in vehement epithets, or express a refined scorn by a slight lift of the tip of

the aquiline nose when his name is mentioned. For my part I am content to be in such good company as I find myself, when among admirers and reverers of Whitman. Not English literary men alone—Tennyson, A. C. Swinburne, the Rossettis, E. Dowden, J. A. Symonds, Mrs. Gilchrist, Miss Blind, and a host of others deservedly famous—but Americans of various types, like the Stedmans, father and son, John Burroughs, Whitelaw Reid, Charles A. Dana, John Swinton, George W. Childs, and many, many more, who knew the man as well as his work, and often loved the work for the sake of the man whom they have somehow succeeded in imposing on us as the “Good Gray Poet,” and the “Camden Sage,” titles which will do more for his fame, surely than the laureateship did for Wordsworth, or the barony for Tennyson—nay, more than all laudatory critiques and biographies. What’s in a name? An influence, second only to a living character. Even his haters and assailers bow before the venerable, picturesque champion of the doctrine of the “God” in any and every man, the prophet of a great America about to be discovered, when the chaos of these states has become cosmos by the creation of a new type of athletic, yet spiritual, manhood.





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